TIME

SPECIAL REPORT

APART. NOT ALONE

FINDING COMMON PURPOSE IN A SHARED THREAT

JOSÉ ANDRÉS

A CHEF'S PANDEMIC RELIEF MISSION

By SEAN GREGORY

HEALTH WORKERS ON THE FRONT LINES

HOW TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER

By CONNIE SCHULTZ

FORWARD TOGETHER

By VAN JONES

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This issue of TIME is dedicated to all those coming together to do good for one another. And while there's a lot we could say as a partner with TIME on this issue, it seems like the most appropriate words are "thank you."

To everyone on the front lines, thank you.

To those checking in to see who needs help, thank you.

To everyone making communities stronger, thank you.

To all those doing good, we thank you.

There has never been a more important time to be a good neighbor.

Michael L. Tipsord

President, Chairman & CEO

State Farm Insurance Companies

TIME
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In what has become a nightly community ritual in a time of isolation, Barcelona residents applaud and sing on their balconies as an image of resilience is projected onto a building

Illustration and photograph by Javier Jaén

ON THE COVER: *Photograph by Martin Schoeller for TIME*

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Coming together

WE BEGAN PLANNING THIS SPECIAL ISSUE of TIME before any of us had heard the phrase *flatten the curve,* much less contemplated our own roles in the flattening. Its theme—getting out of silos and coming together as communities—is one we've been thinking about a lot here over the past few years. The world we cover is increasingly tribal and polarized—some studies suggest that empathy itself is in decline—and yet so many of the challenges we face require us to act together. And none more so than this pandemic that is testing our collective strength even in isolation. What does it take to get us to see beyond ourselves, beyond our divisions, and look out for one another?

I started as TIME's editor in 2017, right after a one-two punch of tragedy in the news: the violent protests by white supremacists in Charlottesville, Va., that killed a 32-year-old woman and injured many more, followed 13 days later by the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. Our cover the week of Charlottesville was Hate in America. By contrast, in the issue after Harvey, a moving column by my colleague Susanna Schrobsdorff—inspired by the extraordinary scenes of human chains, of strangers risking their lives to help strangers, of dogs, horses and hawks being pulled out of the floods—told a different story about the character and potential of our communities.

"Over and over, you hear people being reassured as they are supported by the arms of strangers. 'We've got you … I've got you … You're O.K.,'" she wrote. "Even those of us who live far from Houston have been jolted out of our silos."

That is the epic test of character that we face now. Apart. Not Alone, a special issue overseen by Lori Fradkin, is devoted to stories of and by people who are forcing us out of our corners as we focus on a shared threat that is suddenly connecting the entire world. Some are doing it by throwing themselves into the fray as first responders—the courageous medical workers isolating themselves from their own families as they treat patients with the virus, the bus drivers delivering meals to kids in need whose schools have closed, and the leaders from businesses and nonprofit organizations, like the subject of this issue's cover profile, José Andrés, with whom TIME's Sean Gregory spent weeks traveling from one crisis to the next, only to find Andrés on the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak as this issue headed to press.

Our government must do much more to support the frontline responders. But we all have a role to play as billions of people now are, by staying at home, often despite extreme hardship. It's hard to fathom another moment when so many of us will find ourselves so dependent on the goodwill of strangers.

We are apart, but we are not alone.

"We wave hello and talk across our tiny yards," the journalist and novelist Connie Schultz writes of her neighborhood in Cleveland. "The questions rise like songs: 'How are you holding up?' 'What do you need?' 'How can I help?' The chorus is always the same: I see you."

We don't know when this storm will pass. But we do know how to help.

"Without empathy," Andrés tells us, "nothing works."

Edward Felsenthal,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & CEO
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TIME FOR KIDS

To help parents and teachers coping with school closures, TIME for Kids is offering free global access to its library of grade-specific (K-6) digital issues, as well as the financial-literacy magazine *Your $,* for the rest of the school year, thanks to the support of Google, AT&T, HP and the PwC Charitable Foundation. Sign up at **time.com/tfk-free** and find worksheets and quizzes at **timeforkids.com**

HOW TO HELP On TIME.com, find a list of organizations and fundraisers accepting donations for health care workers, food banks and people who are unemployed because of COVID-19 at **time.com/coronavirus-help**

PROGRAMMING NOTE
Apart. Not Alone is a special double issue that will be on sale for two weeks. The next issue of TIME will be published on April 9 and available at newsstands on April 10.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ▸ An article in the March 30 issue, "Postpartum anxiety goes undiagnosed," stated that Dr. Samantha Meltzer-Brody believed that anxiety could be one way in which postpartum depression manifests but that it was not a distinct category. She said this in a 2017 interview, and her view has changed since then. She now says many professionals in the field endorse the idea of anxiety as a distinct category of perinatal mental-health disorders.

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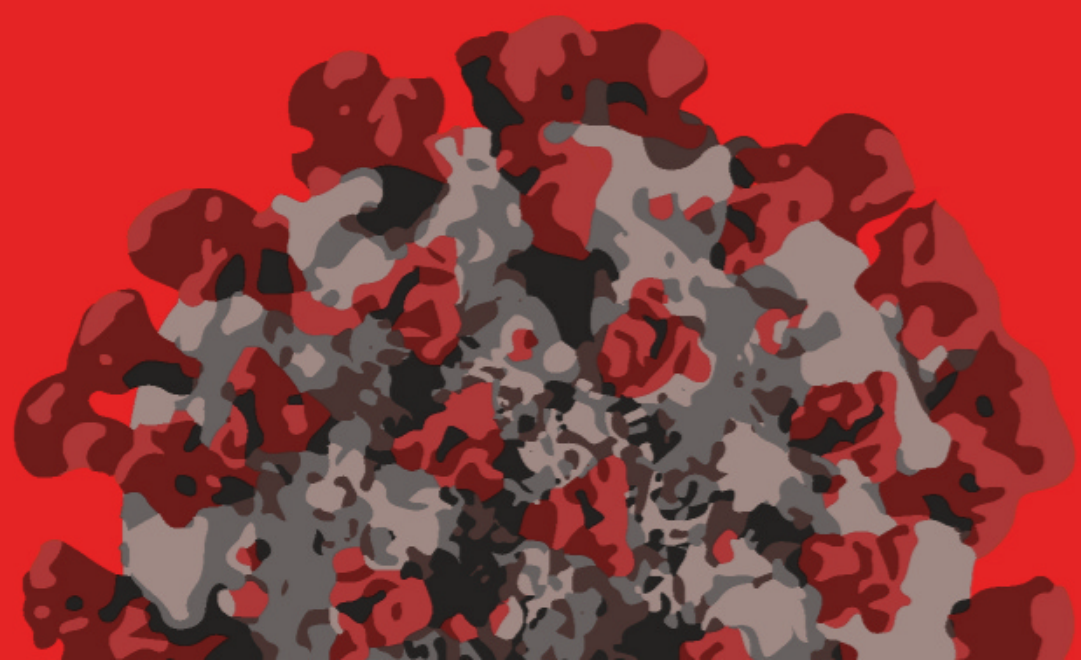

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ...

The 100 Women of the Year issue (March 16–23) marked the centennial of women's suffrage in the U.S. by recognizing the women who shaped each year since 1920. Readers enjoyed learning about these women—each of whom was featured on a cover design—and some on the list offered feedback of their own.

'Move over fellas ... this girl is one of @time's 100 WOMEN of the Year! It just keeps getting better and better ...!'

—**RITA MORENO,** actor and 1961 pick, on Twitter

'What a wonderful education I received from reading your 100 Women of the Year issue. I must have been absent the day we covered that in school.'

—**PHILIP DUNNE,** Palmer, Alaska

'At age 93, I am often disappointed that women are not progressing fast enough for me ... I'm thrilled that we have come this far, but I still have great hope that I will see equality, and women's rightful place all over this planet.'

—**RUTH KNOWLES SCHOLZ,** Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

'I'm grateful every day for being a part of a movement that brings us closer to freedom.'

—**PATRISSE CULLORS,** activist and 2013 pick, on Instagram

'A fantastic issue—however I can't believe that Mother Teresa was not included!'

—**SUZANNE PURRINGTON,** Raleigh, N.C.

'Well this caught me by surprise.'

—**ELLEN DEGENERES,** comedian and 1997 pick, on Twitter

'Thanking TIME magazine for featuring Afghan Queen Soraya among the top one hundred women who defined the last century.'

—**HAMID KARZAI,** former President of Afghanistan, about the 1927 pick, on Twitter

'I cried. About the women I did not know about. The women I forgot about. Accomplishments my children did not learn of. History we have missed.'

—**BETH HALAAS,** Cheney, Wash.

'I'm honored to be included alongside 99 remarkable women.'

—**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,** former U.S. Secretary of State and 2016 pick, on Twitter

'I think this should be an annual thing since there are so many other women that deserve to be on the list. I can imagine it was very difficult to narrow it down to just 100.'

—**LORI REISER,** St. Augustine, Fla.

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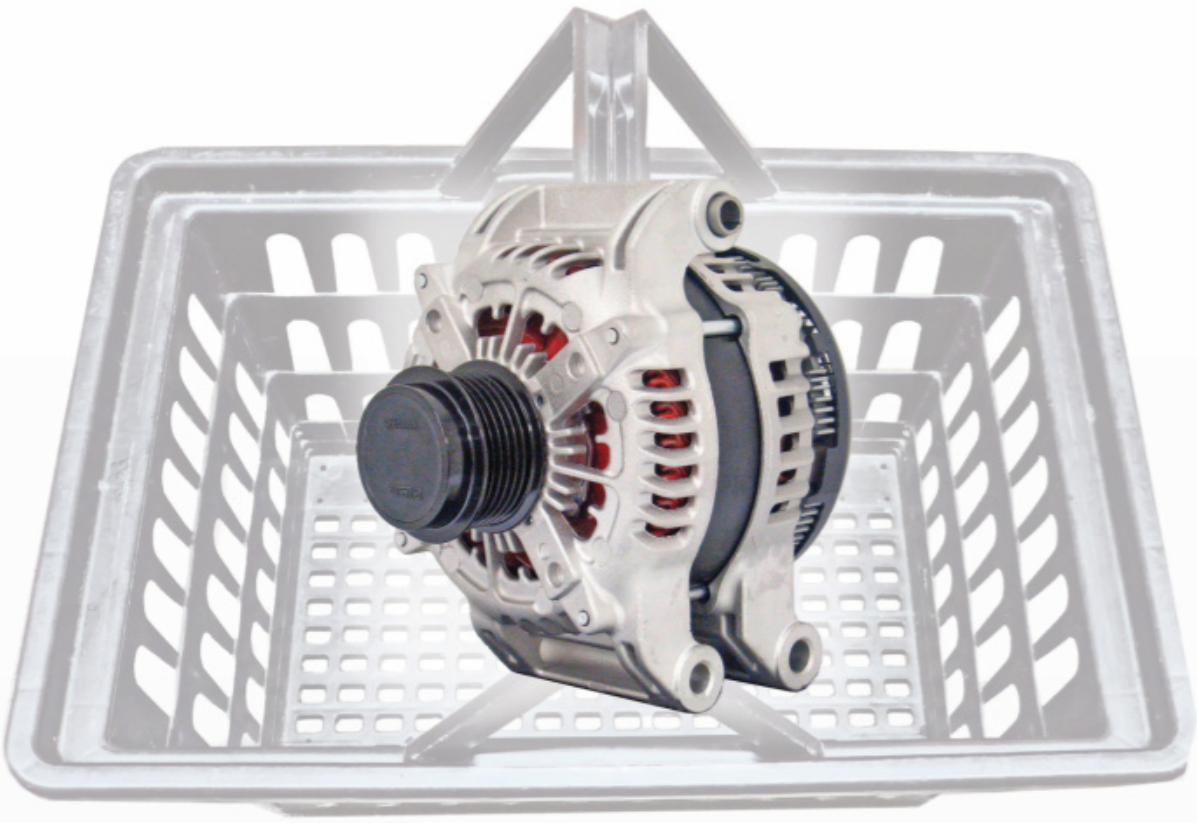

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‘WE ARE NOT OWED OUR DREAMS.’

ALLYSON FELIX, sprinter and six-time Olympic gold medalist, in a TIME op-ed on coming to terms with disappointment after the 2020 Olympics were postponed on March 24 in the name of public health

‘We who don’t belong to a risk group have an enormous responsibility, our actions can be the difference between life and death for many others.’

GRETA THUNBERG,
climate activist, announcing on Instagram on March 24 that it’s “extremely likely” she had COVID-19

150,000

New jobs Walmart, the U.S.’s largest employer, said on March 19 it will need to fill because of COVID-19; as states across the country shut down nonessential businesses, retailers like Walmart have seen major increases in demand

‘Yes, I’m Asian. And yes, I have coronavirus. But I did not get it from China. I got it in America.’

DANIEL DAE KIM,
actor, in a March 19 video, speaking out against anti-Asian racism related to the COVID-19 pandemic

$875,369,840.07

Amount spent, through February, by Michael Bloomberg’s failed campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, according to filings made public on March 20; the campaign also amassed more than $30 million in debt

‘By the end of April, our health care system will collapse.’

LUIZ HENRIQUE MANDETTA,
Brazil’s Health Minister, as the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases rose 45% to a total of 904 on March 20

GOOD NEWS *of the week*

Figures published on March 19 indicate an increase in the population of wild black rhinos, a win for conservation efforts for the critically endangered species

‘I was just trying to lighten the mood.’

ANTHONY CRAPANZANO,
New Jersey restaurant owner, on including a free roll of toilet paper—which has been in short supply—with takeout orders; the state imposed a broad shutdown on March 21

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME

SOURCES: NPR; ASBURY PARK PRESS; THE HILL; THE GUARDIAN

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The Brief

CARE AND CONCERN
The open doors to the emergency department at a hospital in New York City on March 23

INSIDE

6 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE LANDMARK STIMULUS DEAL

LOCUSTS THREATEN CROPS IN AFRICA AND BEYOND

NAOMI JUDD REMEMBERS KENNY ROGERS

PHOTOGRAPH BY MISHA FRIEDMAN

HEALTH

A medical system on life support

By Jamie Ducharme

WHEN DR. MARK LEWIS HAS TO GIVE A cancer patient bad news, he usually offers a hug or a hand to hold. The idea of doing so by phone felt heartbreakingly impersonal, he says. But in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Salt Lake City–based gastrointestinal oncologist has had to do many things that make his "conscience weigh heavy." He's delivered tough prognoses virtually, to limit the chance of spreading the virus. He's delayed chemotherapy for patients who—he hopes—can wait, knowing the treatment would wipe out their immune system. He's made the opposite choice for patients with cancer spreading faster than coronavirus. All he can do is hope he's gambled well. Welcome to medicine in the age of COVID-19.

The novel coronavirus has upended the U.S. medical system—and not just for those dealing directly with the pandemic. Patients with chronic conditions will have to fight to get the care they need, not only now but also after the outbreak ends, when hospitals are left to deal with backlogs of appointments canceled en masse. Anyone with the misfortune to get into a car accident or have a heart attack during the outbreak will be at the mercy of a strained system. And in this environment, the gulf between people who can and cannot afford to seek out good care will become ever more apparent.

As of publication, U.S. hospitals are still operating smoothly, for the most part, but obstacles are mounting. In a system in which routine supply and demand leaves only about a third of hospital beds open on a normal day, medical centers are nearing capacity, particularly in hard-hit areas. As fears mount, "morale is low," says Dr. Chethan Sathya, an assistant professor of surgery and pediatrics at New York's Cohen Children's Hospital. Each day's work, Sathya says, raises the chances of doctors getting sick and passing the virus to their families. Ready as they are to serve, that thought is never far from their minds.

Surgeons like Sathya have been directed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to postpone elective procedures to keep beds and supplies available. Deciding whose care can't wait, however, isn't always easy. A patient on dialysis can wait a few weeks for a kidney transplant, but should she? And facilities have placed often heartbreaking limits on visitors—including, in some New York City hospital systems, on partners of women in labor. Doctors of all specialties and career stages are pausing their day jobs to provide critical care or pitching in to support physicians on the front lines. "I've been brushing up on how to manage a ventilator, because I haven't had to do that in almost a decade," Lewis says. "In a week, two weeks, I might have to shift from the long-term care of cancer patients to acute critical care."

'We're going to know—for better or worse—whether we have enough of what it takes.'

DR. ANTHONY FAUCI, on March 18, on whether doctors will be able to keep up with "the kind of medicine that we optimally would want to practice"

LEWIS AND OTHER DOCTORS have little choice, and the consequences of that fact will be far-reaching. Dr. Anupam Jena, an associate professor of health care policy at Harvard Medical School, says patients with conditions like strokes and heart attacks may fare worse than normal if they delay going to the hospital or if emergency departments can't see them as quickly. Some people who follow directions and cancel routine screenings may go longer without knowing if they have cancer or diabetes.

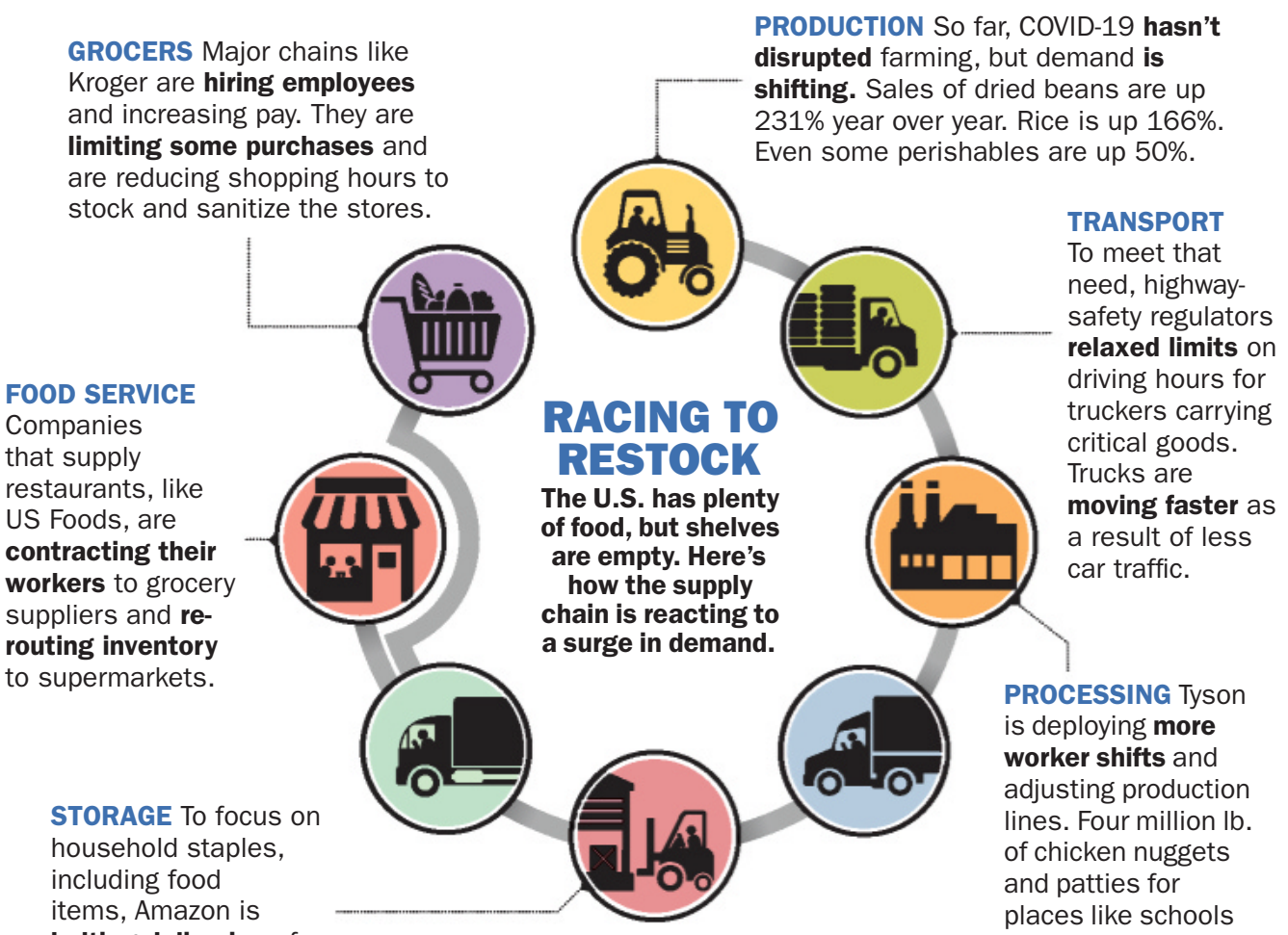
The outbreak has also thrown the relationship between wealth and health into sharper relief than ever. Research suggests the richest 1% of Americans can expect to live more than a decade longer than the poorest 1%—and that's without a pandemic. COVID-19 has drawn a clear line between people who can work from home and those in service-focused jobs who must be physically present, thereby risking infection. The country's most vulnerable populations, like the homeless and those living below the poverty line, are the least able to stock up on groceries and hunker down inside; they're also less likely to have the means to safely travel to a doctor's office if that's what's needed.

And the gap is likely to widen, Sathya says. "As the unemployment rate rises because of this, people are going to have less and less access to health insurance," he says. If health care is in high demand and short supply, wealth will play an increasingly ugly role in who gets it.

But some doctors hope COVID-19 will push one fairly egalitarian solution into prime time: telemedicine. Virtual appointments have long been seen as a way to expand access to care, but adoption of the system has been sluggish. Telemedicine provider Amwell, which works with more than 2,000 U.S. hospitals, has seen usage grow 257% nationwide during the pandemic, and about 700% in Washington State, a company representative says. The crisis has also prompted CMS to temporarily ease long-standing restrictions, allowing Medicare to cover more telehealth services.

Telemedicine isn't a cure-all. Some ailments can't be treated this way, and some patients can't access the technology. But its proponents say those changes—and a growing awareness of the disparities that prompted them—would be one of the ripple effects worth keeping around even after life goes back to normal. "Out of every catastrophe," Lewis says, "we try to see the silver lining." ☐

FAUCI: JIM LO SCALZO—EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK



NOTE: YEAR-OVER-YEAR SALES ARE FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 14, FROM NIELSEN RETAIL MEASUREMENT SERVICES
SOURCES: KROGER; AMAZON; ATA; ATRI; UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA; TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY; TYSON FOODS; US FOODS

GOOD QUESTION

We're online more than ever right now. Can the Internet keep up?

AS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE GO ONLINE TO stay productive and connected while trying to "flatten the curve" of the COVID-19 pandemic, they're putting the Internet itself under enormous pressure. A home or neighborhood Internet connection is like a highway: the more traffic being sent back and forth, the longer it takes for data to get where it needs to go—and traffic worldwide is up 35% in the past two weeks, says networking firm CenturyLink. As the offline world seems to grind to a halt, is there enough bandwidth to go around?

Demand is highest in the evening right now, says CenturyLink CTO Andrew Dugan. That suggests that while people may be shifting their typical workplace Internet use to the home, they're also online more than usual after hours, watching movies and chatting. Some services, like Netflix and YouTube, are already reducing the quality of some content in Europe to manage demand; similar steps could be taken in the U.S. Meanwhile, Internet providers are augmenting their networks to handle the load. At the same time, many are relaxing their data limits, which is good news for monthly bills but may encourage even more use.

People who need a faster connection may consider paying for a higher-speed package, but advertised speeds are rarely guaranteed. And even if their access is uninterrupted, the COVID-19 outbreak will still put a spotlight on the broadband gap. A 2015 Pew survey found that 15% of rural U.S. households lacked broadband access, making it harder or impossible to work or learn remotely. Advocates say it's a problem that needs addressing sooner rather than later. "We should celebrate that so many people have the ability to [work remotely], but we have to recognize that there are disconnected people among us who don't," says FCC commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel.

In the meantime, just as you shouldn't hoard toilet paper or soap, don't be a bandwidth hog—turning off devices when they aren't in use can help free up bandwidth for your neighbors on the same local network.

—PATRICK LUCAS AUSTIN

SPOTLIGHT

How COVID-19 affects pregnancy

Pregnancy can be an uncertain time even without a pandemic. Now researchers are rapidly trying to figure out the risks of COVID-19 to pregnant women and newborns.

U.S. experts say that for now, pregnant women should follow general guidelines, including handwashing, and continue to attend their prenatal checkups. The World Health Organization agrees, saying there is "no evidence" that pregnant women are at higher risk from COVID-19 but that because of changes in their bodies and immune systems, they can be badly affected by respiratory infections.

So far, there is no data suggesting an increased risk of miscarriage or that the virus can pass on to a developing fetus. Although a newborn baby in London tested positive for the virus in mid-March, it's unclear whether the virus was transmitted in the womb or during labor. So far, children account for a tiny share of COVID-19 infections; however, of children who do develop severe cases, infants under 12 months are most at risk.

One encouraging fact is that the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been found in breast milk. The CDC advises a mother who is symptomatic to take precautions, including wearing a face mask while breastfeeding, but experts don't recommend mothers with symptoms stop breastfeeding—particularly because antibodies in the milk can help fight the virus.

—Madeline Roache

Trump weighs cost in lives to help the economy

By Brian Bennett and Tessa Berenson

AS THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS RAVAGED THE U.S., PRESIDENT Donald Trump weighed whether to lift or lessen social restrictions designed to save lives and avoid swamping hospitals with COVID-19 patients. To slow the spread of the pandemic, the White House had recommended upending daily life by working from home; limiting social gatherings to 10 or fewer people; and avoiding travel, restaurants and nonessential shopping, among other measures. But with industry grinding to a halt and unemployment set to soar, Trump began asserting that the damage to the economy may outstrip the damage to public health. "We have to go back to work much sooner than people thought," Trump said March 24. He announced April 12, Easter Sunday, as a goal.

Public-health officials warn that relaxing stringent social distancing that soon could be a lethal mistake. Modeling by Imperial College London suggests there would be hundreds of thousands of additional deaths in the U.S. if people are not kept apart long enough. "I cannot see that all of a sudden, next week or two weeks from now, it's going to be over," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told the *Today* show on March 20.

'We can't have the cure be worse than the problem.'

PRESIDENT TRUMP, saying he wants to loosen social-distancing restrictions soon

But public-health experts are not the only advisers who have Trump's ear. The White House is divided. On one side are Fauci, White House coronavirus adviser Dr. Deborah Birx and Centers for Disease Control director Robert Redfield, who all have been advocating for strict measures to prevent the number of cases from peaking too quickly and overwhelming the capacity of the U.S. health care system. This approach puts health first, backed by the logic that the economy won't bounce back until the virus is under control and Americans feel secure venturing out.

Trump, after downplaying the threat posed by the virus for weeks, appeared to have embraced the public-health strategy, instituting the 15-day guidelines on March 16. "His view is whatever the costs are to save lives, we'll all bear them together and then we'll all rebuild together," Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, told TIME.

But the President's top economic advisers, including Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and National Economic Council director Larry Kudlow, are, like Trump, preoccupied with the economic cost of the virus fight. The stock market has cratered during the pandemic, shedding all the gains it made during Trump's presidency. Economists at Morgan Stanley project U.S. GDP will contract some 30% over the next three months, driving unemployment up to double digits. Without providing data to substantiate the claim, Trump predicted that could also cause "tremendous death."

Trump says he wants to ease economic restrictions by Easter

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG before the economic pain became more than Trump could bear. An aide said the President was disturbed by what he heard during a conference call with thousands of small-business owners on March 20. That day he told reporters, "We can't have the cure be worse than the problem." His own hotels and golf clubs had suffered steep declines in revenue. "I wouldn't say you're thriving when you decide to close down your hotels and your businesses," Trump said a day later in response to a question from TIME. "It's hurting me, and it's hurting Hilton, and it's hurting all of the great hotel chains all over the world."

TRUMP: SHUTTERSTOCK; SCHUMER: MICHAEL REYNOLDS—EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Trump then became more willing to push back on his medical advisers, saying they want to "shut down the whole world" and "you can't do that." The President's new emphasis served to undermine the clear, consistent messaging crucial in a public-health crisis. Nor is the vacillation necessarily over. Trump's natural inclination is to ease restrictions on commerce, a senior Administration official noted, but "if information comes back to him and doctors say there could be severe physical harm," he may be open to extending limits on large gatherings. States are free to leave their own restrictions in place or impose new ones, and Trump may leave it to them to take the lead, the official said. Yet some will surely take their cues from the President if he relaxes the federal guidance.

"It's a nightmare," the Administration official says of the situation. "It's a freaking nightmare." ◻

What's in the $2 trillion bailout

In the early hours of March 25, the Senate and White House reached a landmark deal on a $2 trillion relief package for millions of Americans and businesses hurt by the coronavirus pandemic. The bargain, agreed to after days of nonstop negotiations, paves the way for the largest aid package in U.S. history. Lawmakers were still negotiating details midweek, but expected to vote the bill into law within days. "This is a wartime level of investment into our nation," said Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell after announcing the deal. Here are six key provisions.

DIRECT PAYMENTS TO AMERICANS. American taxpayers earning up to $75,000 will receive $1,200, and couples earning up to $150,000 will receive $2,400. Beyond those amounts, payments will decrease for individuals earning up to $99,000 and couples earning $198,000. Congressional aides said details were still coming together, but that every child in single- and two-parent households earning less than $198,000 will also receive a $500 payment. It is unclear when the payments will start.

EXPANDED UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE. The government will provide people who are unemployed with a $600 weekly stipend for up to four months, on top of benefits already provided by states. These payments will go to people who have been laid off or furloughed, and to out-of-work members of the gig economy.

$150 BILLION FOR HEALTH CARE. The deal allots $150 billion for the health care system and hospitals, which have been sounding the alarm that they will soon exceed capacity and are already running low on critical supplies; $100 billion will go directly to hospitals, and the additional funds will go toward supplies, medical research and workforce increases.

LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESSES. Lawmakers say they are allocating at least $360 billion to help small businesses and nonprofits. Much of that will go to businesses to pay workers, mortgage interest and rent. Pennsylvania Senator Pat Toomey said businesses of up to 500 employees are eligible for this assistance.

LOANS TO STATE GOVERNMENTS AND INDUSTRIES. The Treasury Department will create a fund worth $500 billion or more to assist local and state governments and industries hit by the pandemic. According to Toomey, the Treasury will also make $46 billion in direct financial assistance, including $25 billion to airlines, $17 billion for national security and $4 billion for cargo.

OVERSIGHT OF CORPORATE USE OF FUNDS. Democrats fought for stringent oversight of the Treasury fund, arguing that Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin could personally benefit from the funds without anyone knowing. The GOP agreed to appoint an inspector general to oversee the fund, and any businesses controlled by Trump, Pence, Mnuchin, or heads of executive departments or their spouses, in-laws or offspring are barred from receiving loans.

—Alana Abramson and Philip Elliott

Chuck Schumer led negotiations for Senate Democrats ›

NEWS TICKER

U.S. closes north and south borders

The U.S. partially **closed its borders with Canada and Mexico to nonessential travel,** beginning March 21, in an attempt to limit the spread of COVID-19. Commercial trade—in addition to crossings for medical purposes, education and emergency response—was still permitted.

North Korea fires two missiles

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles on March 21, the country's third test in a month as it **continues to ramp up military capabilities amid stalled negotiations with the Trump Administration.** South Korea called the tests "very inappropriate" at a time of global pandemic.

U.S. threatens to slash Afghan aid

The U.S. will cut **$1 billion in aid to Afghanistan** in response to the continued failure of President Ashraf Ghani and rival Abdullah Abdullah to reach an agreement after disputed elections last September, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on March 23. The funding may be restored if the leaders come to a deal.

Locusts swarm up from vegetation near Archers Post, north of Nairobi, on Jan. 22

THE BULLETIN

A plague of locusts threatens livelihoods

OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, MASSIVE swarms of locusts, one of which occupied an area more than three times the size of New York City, have devoured crops across the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, leaving an estimated 20 million people at risk of famine. The first generation's eggs are starting to hatch, and now even bigger swarms are forming, threatening countries from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Yemen, Iran, Pakistan and India, "representing an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods," says the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

PERFECT STORM Desert locusts are usually solitary creatures, but when weather conditions are right, their populations explode. That explosion can create dense swarms that can travel great distances—more than 90 miles in a day—in search of food. Warm weather and unusually heavy rains in the Horn of Africa at the end of 2019 provided the moist soil necessary for hatching eggs. From there, the insects spread rapidly, resulting in one of the worst outbreaks the region has seen in more than 70 years.

VORACIOUS EATERS A typical swarm, numbering 4 billion to 8 billion locusts, can consume in one day the same amount of food as 3.5 million people. Some swarms have been so thick in parts of Kenya that they have prevented planes from taking off. Governments have resorted to widespread aerial spraying of pesticides when available; in poorer regions, where aircraft are scarce, soldiers battle the swarms with handheld spray pumps, while farmers attempt to drive them away by clanging pots and pans.

URGENT APPEAL The FAO has appealed for $138 million to support affected communities. If the locusts are not stopped before the next generation hatches, the impact could be catastrophic: the FAO estimates that an additional 25 million people across the region could lose their crops and their livelihoods. Scientists in Kenya hope a new computer-assisted tracking program that combines satellite data with weather-mapping software will help predict the swarms' next destination, buying regional authorities enough time to prepare a response. But coronavirus-related travel restrictions have hindered relief efforts as well as response mechanisms. The locusts have no such travel limitations.

—ARYN BAKER

LOCUSTS: TONY KARUMBA—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; ROGERS: SILVER SCREEN COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; OLYMPICS: FABRICE COFFRINI—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

DIED
Tony Award–winning playwright **Terrence McNally,** of complications from COVID-19, on March 24, at 81.

ABOLISHED
Colorado's death penalty, after Governor Jared Polis signed legislation, on March 23.

MOVED
The U.S. **income tax filing date,** from April 15 to July 15, in a decision announced March 20.

ISSUED
A global Level 4 travel advisory, recommending **U.S. citizens avoid all international travel,** by the U.S. State Department, on March 19.

FIRED
Two Chicago police officers who shot at a stolen car in a 2016 chase that resulted in the death of an unarmed black teenager.

AGREED
By California's Pacific Gas & Electric, to **plead guilty to involuntary manslaughter,** on March 23, over its role in the 2018 Camp Fire, which killed at least 86.

PUBLISHED
Woody Allen's **controversial memoir, *Apropos of Nothing,*** on March 23, after it was canceled by its original publisher.

DISCOVERED
Fossilized 555 million-year-old evidence of a wormlike creature that may be the **earliest ancestor of humans** and other animals, according to researchers, on March 23.

DIED

Kenny Rogers

Country music's ace

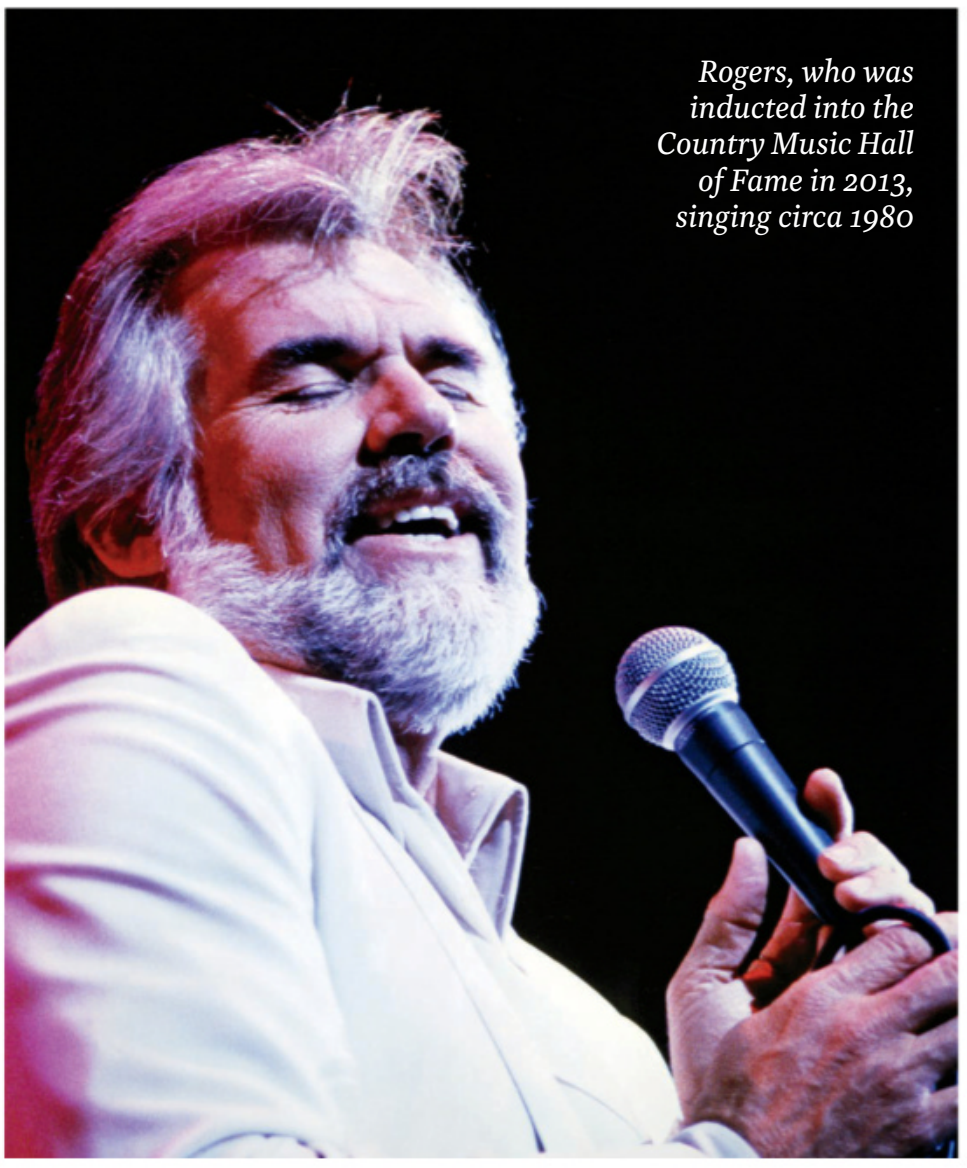
By Naomi Judd

WHEN KENNY ROGERS, WHO DIED AT 81 ON MARCH 20, ASKED me to play the role of his love interest in his 1993 TV movie *Rio Diablo,* I was overjoyed. But before we shot the first scene, I was an absolute mess with nerves. Yes, I've sung in the Super Bowl halftime show, but acting in a dramatic western was brand-new to me.

In the first scene, I was supposed to run toward Kenny, put my arms around him and scream, "Don't leave, they will kill you!" Just as I touched him, he whispered, "For God's sake, Naomi, don't laugh." Of course, this immediately sent me into doing the bent-over double belly laugh. The director and crew laughingly told me to expect such pranks on the set. I decided to get back at Kenny. In the next scene, I was giving him a bath in an old claw-footed bathtub. Kenny was wearing only his underwear, so I hid his robe. Never thought I'd ever be giving Kenny Rogers a bath, much less see him almost naked.

I was a huge fan of Kenny's long before I ever met him. I loved him, and the times I spent with him are some of my best memories. When I got Kenny's Christmas card this year, I saw a laughing Kenny with his lovely wife Wanda. As I stared at the card, *a life well lived* was the phrase that came to mind.

***Judd** is a Grammy-winning country musician and actor*



Rogers, who was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2013, singing circa 1980

The Olympic rings, seen in Tokyo on March 23

POSTPONED

Tokyo Olympics

Until 2021

THE WORLD'S ATHLETES raised their voices. During the COVID-19 outbreak, they explained, training for the Olympics was all but impossible. With the Tokyo Games still set to begin in July, even as most other major sporting events were canceled or delayed, many athletes faced a cruel dilemma: sacrifice practice for the sake of public health, or ignore social-distancing and quarantine instructions while chasing gold. "We want to compete," American sprinter Wallace Spearmon told TIME. "But not at the cost of a life."

These voices were heard. Following pressure from athletes and national governing bodies, the International Olympic Committee and Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee jointly announced on March 24 that for the first time ever, the Olympics would be postponed a year, giving athletes much-needed clarity in uncertain times. (They've been canceled three times, because of world war.)

The world will miss the spectacle this summer. But Tokyo 2021 could be a joyous celebration of global resilience, with a pandemic trailing in the distance, nowhere near the podium.

—SEAN GREGORY

For organizer **Ady Barkan,** COVID-19 is yet another reason to pass Medicare for All

By Abigail Abrams / Santa Barbara, Calif.

IT'S A COOL, CLEAR WEDNESDAY NIGHT IN MID-March, and Ady Barkan is at home in Santa Barbara, Calif., hosting an emergency call with 3,200 supporters. As COVID-19 sweeps across the country, triggering emergency prohibitions and thousands of hospitalizations, people are looking to Barkan for leadership. But for a few long minutes, the line is quiet. The technology on Barkan's computer that's supposed to help him speak using his eye movements isn't working. He tries once, then again, and after another minute of anxious silence, Barkan's synthetic voice suddenly fills the air. "Out of this emergency, America will emerge a new nation," he says. "But in what direction will we go?"

While the point of this call is to catalyze immediate action—to reach out to vulnerable people during the crisis and demand aid from Congress—these efforts are not divorced from Barkan's unshakable long-term goal: passing Medicare for All. It is his hope that the COVID-19 pandemic, in all its hideous destruction, will expose the gaps in the fragmented American health care system.

Already, it's clear that the system is not working: those who lost their health insurance when they lost their jobs are now facing a global health catastrophe with neither an income nor access to affordable health care. And without insurance, people have every incentive to avoid medical care, lest they be saddled with potentially tens of thousands in hospital bills. Even those with good insurance can expect to pay thousands in deductibles and co-pays should they find themselves in the emergency room. COVID-19 has not caused these problems, but it has shone the spotlight on them—which may, in some twisted way, Barkan says, offer his movement an opportunity.

When all this is over, Barkan asks, "Will we slide ever deeper into a nightmare of inequality, precarity and social alienation? Or will we use this crisis to begin to make the big structural changes that we need to build a more just and equitable society?" As he gets going, listeners post encouraging messages and emojis in the conference's chat window.

"The answer," Barkan says, "depends in large part on what we do in the coming days."

THE ABILITY TO PLUCK an opportunity from disaster—or at least to refuse to allow calamity to stand in the way of progress—is perhaps the defining characteristic of Barkan's life. In October 2016, he and his wife Rachael Scarborough King were just settling down. He was working at the Center for Popular Democracy, she had secured a job as an English professor at University of California, Santa Barbara, and the two of them had a brand-new baby boy, Carl.

Then, out of the blue, Barkan was diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. The disease has already paralyzed him from the neck down, and at some point it will take his life. His home is full of the cruelties and contradictions of this reality: a stocked bar cart in the corner of the kitchen is now half hidden under boxes of medical gloves; the accoutrements of his disease—feeding tubes and Clorox wipes—coexist among kids' toys. (Barkan and King had a second child, Willow, last year.)

But if Barkan's diagnosis was unforeseeable, it also defined the trajectory of his life. By giving him a front-row seat to the "moral abomination" of the U.S. health care system, he says, it motivated him in a way he might not otherwise have been. In the past 3½ years, he has weaponized his entire self—his mind, his story, his extraordinary personal challenges—to lobby and organize and advocate for Medicare for All. Sixteen years ago, when he met King at Columbia University, he was more of an "institutionalist liberal," King tells me—a description that causes him to playfully raise an eyebrow: it's clear that over the years Barkan's politics has moved to the left. A decade ago, when Congress was debating the Affordable Care Act, Barkan had hoped for a "public option" that would let people choose a government insurance plan, but now that's not enough. It's got to be Medicare for All, he says: "Only a truly ambitious, radical departure from the status quo that replaces the exploitative for-profit model with one that guarantees health care as a right for all" will fix the problem.

Barkan's first brush with fame came in December 2017, when a video of him confronting Senator Jeff Flake about the Republican tax bill went viral, earning him cable-news appearances, speaking engagements and a massive audience. By April 2018, he and Liz Jaff, the Democratic strategist who had filmed the encounter, launched his PAC, Be a Hero, with two goals: to defeat Republicans in Congress and to lobby for policies like Medicare for All. Since then, Barkan has become a celebrity of the progressive movement, touring 22 states ahead of the 2018 midterms, being arrested at least seven times on Capitol Hill, and preaching the gospel of universal single-payer to his 156,000 Twitter followers. In November, Barkan endorsed Elizabeth Warren, and when she dropped out, he threw his support behind Bernie Sanders.

Now that the Democratic Party appears to be coalescing around former Vice President Joe Biden, Barkan and his team at Be a Hero are

HUMANIZING THE PROBLEM

'Things becoming impossible'
Before his ALS, Barkan loved to cook pasta alla Norma, a dish with a roasted eggplant and red sauce.

$20,000
The monthly cost of Barkan's home health care, which is not covered by private insurance.

One-on-one
All the major Democratic presidential candidates agreed to an interview with Barkan about health care—except for Joe Biden.

ROZETTE RAGO—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

regrouping. Barkan sees two opportunities.

The first is that the Democratic base—moderates and liberals alike—appears to support some version of Medicare for All, according to a survey Be a Hero commissioned in February. Exit polls in nearly every primary contest corroborate the finding: the majority of Democratic voters support some national government health plan. Reaching those voters is key, Barkan says, and he believes he's well positioned to play unifier. Despite his politics, the core of Be a Hero's base are moderate, older white women who were drawn into political activism after 2016, and joined Barkan's cohort after the Brett Kavanaugh hearings. He understands where that demographic is coming from—and believes his story can convince them that Medicare for All is the right path forward.

The second opportunity is much more pressing: COVID-19. In the short term, Barkan's Be a Hero group is working to get nurses and doctors the supplies they need, while pushing Congress to help working people weather the economic storm. But in the longer term, Barkan says this pandemic, in laying bare the need for universal government health care, may push forward solutions to the problems that Americans face every day. A crisis, after all, can be clarifying. According to a Morning Consult poll, 41% of Americans say the coronavirus outbreak makes them more likely to support government-run health care.

ALS 'made me really see what a moral abomination our health care system is.'

ADY BARKAN, health care activist

One evening in March, after yet another conference call, Barkan settles in with his family. King is playing with Willow, and Carl, who's nearly 4 now, is home from day care. Before Barkan lost his voice, he recorded himself singing and playing guitar, and Carl now demands to hear the recordings at night, especially the Grateful Dead's "Ripple."

As the coronavirus outbreak worsens just outside their door, Barkan is scared but calm. Since he already uses a ventilator, contracting COVID-19 would be particularly dangerous for him, but he can't entirely quarantine his family because he relies on six around-the-clock caregivers. He says his energy is focused on a bigger challenge: creating a society for Carl and Willow in which everyone can access the resources they need. ☐

The Father will see you now

Matthew Fish of Holy Family Catholic Church in Hillcrest Heights, Md., waits for parishioners at his drive-through confessional on March 20. As the coronavirus disrupts lives around the world, Fish is among those who have sought ways to meet the needs of observant community members, even as their houses of faith remain closed. "The important thing is to not just keep that 6-ft. distance but to give people the option of anonymity and to preserve confidentiality," Fish told *Washingtonian* of his setup in the parking lot next to the rectory. "I got some clamps, found an old curtain, and duct-taped and clamped it together . . . We advertise it at our usual Confession time."

Photograph by Evy Mages—Washingtonian

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TheView

NATION

WE NEED MILITARY HELP

By James Stavridis

When I was commander of U.S. Southern Command, in charge of all military operations south of the U.S., I was lucky enough to break my admiral's flag in the U.S.N.S. *Comfort*, the massive U.S. Navy hospital ship. Now *Comfort* and her sister ship *Mercy* are soon to deploy to the East and West coasts, respectively, of the U.S.

INSIDE

CHINA'S AND AMERICA'S POINTLESS FINGER-POINTING

LESSONS FROM LIBERIA'S FIGHT AGAINST EBOLA

THE RIGHT MINDSET AS THE MARKETS MELT DOWN

Both ships are highly capable—70,000 tons, a thousand hospital beds and 1,200 medical professionals in addition to the Navy sailors who actually operate the ship. In fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, their mission will be to supplement the hospitals ashore, bringing capability to bear so local medical facilities are not overwhelmed. They are a good example of what the military can do in the face of crisis.

What else can our 1.2 million active-duty troops and the 800,000 members of our National Guard and reserves do?

An important caveat: The military's first order of business must be to maintain its own health and capability so we can ensure our national security. We cannot have coronavirus bring down our strategic nuclear forces. Our Navy ships must be ready to sail on combat missions.

But there is a great deal the military can do to help:

The hospital ship U.S.N.S. Comfort off the coast of Saint Kitts and Nevis in October

Medical research and development. These are core military functions, particularly in terms of biowarfare and biodefense. Military expertise and supplies of protective gear can be critical. Fort Detrick in Maryland, for example, is a center of biological capability for research and operational deployment of equipment to wield in a dangerous bioenvironment.

Industrial capability. There are 300,000 businesses working with the Department of Defense in the Defense Industrial Base. These are highly capable, innovative companies whose research, production and delivery capabilities can be tapped for everything from vaccine production to manufacturing face masks. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, for example, has advanced research in many fields relevant to this effort. The Defense Production Act, which President Trump says he may invoke, streamlines the ability to shift production toward vital materials.

Logistics and critical infrastructure. Our Air Force is flying missions moving medical supplies from overseas to the U.S., while the Army National Guard is trucking parts across the country. The Navy's aircraft carriers and large-deck amphibious ships can provide medical overflow support, as the latter did during Hurricane Katrina. Military capability in sanitation, electrical generation, water purification and information technology will be helpful.

Civil support to populations. As in New Rochelle, outside New York City, the National Guard (under control of the New York governor) has been conducting drive-through testing, delivering food and water to nonmobile portions of the population and preparing sites for possible hospital-overflow situations. This is a classic and well-practiced function of the Guard, particularly after natural disasters.

Law enforcement and control of civil populations. While active-duty personnel are appropriately precluded from conducting law enforcement by the Posse Comitatus laws, the National Guard (when under the direction of governors) can do so. This may be important to enforce curfews, quarantines and security of supply chains.

Border control. If the virus causes panic in Latin America and the Caribbean, we may need to establish stronger control of U.S. borders to prevent a refugee surge from the south. Border patrol and other civil agencies could be overwhelmed, and the military can provide a backstop to such efforts.

Information operations. Our military is expert at monitoring a wide variety of operational scenarios, and the ability to gather, process and analyze intelligence is highly relevant in dealing with pandemics.

Our military—for which Americans collectively pay $700 billion annually—can be a significant part of the fight against this "invisible army."

Stavridis was the 16th Supreme Allied Commander of NATO

SHORT READS

Highlights from stories on **time.com/ideas**

Fear factor

Studies have shown that fear really is contagious, writes Eva Holland, author of *Nerve: Adventures in the Science of Fear.* But that's not necessarily a bad thing. **"It's a survival mechanism," she explains, "and it is designed not only to help us survive as individuals, but to help our communities survive too."**

Just the facts

There's going to be a lot of misinformation about the coronavirus, warn Nadav Ziv, a Stanford undergraduate, and Sam Wineburg, a Stanford professor and the author of *Why Learn History When It Is Already on Your Phone.* Their first piece of advice: **"Distrust your eyes—they're easily deceived."**

A case for inclusion

Taiwan has been shut out of global health talks in recent years, and its exclusion may have cost lives in the fight against COVID-19, writes former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. **"In the 21st century, almost all of our major challenges have cross-border elements to them: climate, health, trade and technology. We cannot afford geopolitical 'black holes.'"**

SHIP: MORGAN K. NALL—U.S. NAVY/SIPA USA; YANG: ANDREW HARNIK—AP

THE RISK REPORT

China and America's blame game over COVID-19 hurts everyone

By Ian Bremmer

THE U.S. AND Chinese governments now appear more interested in taunting each other than cooperating to contain the damage wreaked by COVID-19. That's bad news for the whole world, because if they worked together to limit further human and economic damage from this crisis and to prevent future viral emergencies from going global, there is much they could do.

U.S.-China relations have now reached their lowest point since the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989. Both countries have suffered large-scale loss of life and a sharp economic slowdown, but political officials in both countries are working to protect their own domestic standing by blaming the other's government. President Trump has taken to calling COVID-19 the "Chinese virus," while senior Chinese officials and state media have pushed a ludicrous theory that the U.S. created the virus and planted it in China last fall.

This animosity didn't begin, of course, with coronavirus. Trump has waged a tariff war against China for most of his presidency and threatened the survival of Huawei, the telecom giant central to China's strategy for state-of-the-art 5G technologies.

BUT COVID-19, and China's initial reaction to it, has made matters much worse. In early January, at a time when China was still hiding the spread of the virus (and, even worse, while Chinese citizens were traveling unfettered all around the world), international health officials hoping to enter the country to study the virus and its effects were denied access. In February, Trump Administration officials announced that five Chinese media organizations would be treated essentially as agents of the Chinese government. China immediately retaliated by expelling three *Wall Street Journal* reporters because an article that appeared in that paper referred to China as "the real sick man of Asia."

As for the virus itself, Chinese leaders like to point out that they have achieved remarkable success in containing it at home and have now offered humanitarian help to hard-hit countries like Italy at a time when America is headed for chaos. That's true.

It's also true that this virus, like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2002, began in China, that many Chinese people died needlessly while Chinese Communist Party officials hid the dangers and lied, and that much of the impact elsewhere in the world can be blamed on China's slow initial response.

Washington and Beijing could invest cash and scientific expertise in a joint bid to develop treatments and a vaccine

All true, and in a moment of true global crisis, none of these charges will save a single human life or limit the economic fallout. At a bare minimum, the U.S. and China should share with each other and with global health institutions useful data on COVID-19 to help us understand how to contain this plague. Washington and Beijing could also invest cash and scientific expertise in a joint bid to develop treatments and a vaccine.

They could work together to create an early monitoring and surveillance system to contain future viral threats before they go global, and propose international standards for preparedness and best practices when the next public-health crisis appears, no matter its source. They could take the lead in creating global reserves of medicine and supplies for future emergencies. They could work together to bolster the global economy.

In short, instead of accusing each other of playing with matches, these two powerhouse countries could help put out the fire. ◻

NATION

Cash now

A key component of Andrew Yang's 2020 presidential platform was considered a particularly fringe idea: universal basic income (UBI). His proposal, which he dubbed the Freedom Dividend, would have put $1,000 in the pockets of all U.S. citizens over the age of 18 every single month.

"I'm incredibly excited by the fact that our government seems like they're on the cusp of doing the commonsense thing to help people get through this coronavirus crisis by putting cash straight into a family's hands," Yang tells TIME of the UBI-adjacent solutions that lawmakers in both parties have embraced.

He argues that other economic solutions like paid sick and family leave would take too long to roll out. "We don't have time right now," Yang says. "This is something we actually can implement immediately, in a powerful way, that will improve millions of Americans' lives and make us stronger and healthier from day one."

But Yang isn't taking sole credit for making the idea mainstream. "My goal has always been to eradicate and alleviate all of the unnecessary poverty and deprivation in this country," he says.

—Abby Vesoulis

Amid COVID-19 fallout, Yang's UBI proposal gets a second look

INTELLIGENCE

Even spies now work from home

By John Walcott

ON A RECENT DAY IN A FOREIGN CAPITAL, AN American spy was faced with an unexpected dilemma: how to cancel a clandestine meeting with a promising new recruit. People were not leaving their homes, so the crowded shops, bars, buses and parks that usually provided good cover were empty. There was no longer a place to meet without arousing suspicion.

As the coronavirus pandemic exacts its immeasurable toll on people's lives across the world, it also poses a problem for the U.S. intelligence collection that relies on human contact to track adversaries and secure communications to handle classified information. "It's hard enough to maintain your cover in a crowded city," says a U.S. intelligence officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity. With an increasing number of cities on lockdown, "it's even harder to avoid attracting attention on an empty street," the officer adds. "You can't just pick up the phone or send a text."

Espionage was already getting trickier before the pandemic hit. Some of the tradecraft familiar to readers of spy novels or fans of *The Americans*—"dead drops," in which sensitive material is left in predetermined locations; "brush passes," in which information is exchanged by people bumping into one another; makeup; wigs; changes of clothing and cars—have been complicated in recent years by surveillance cameras, facial recognition and artificial intelligence. To adapt, U.S. spies have developed new methods, but now coronavirus is compromising some of those too, they say.

As intelligence officers adapt to their new environment, Washington agencies tasked with warning of global threats like COVID-19 are improvising as well. The government has invested in spy satellites and other technologies to watch, listen and collect information from sources around the world. But technology alone "fails to reveal what's in the hearts and minds of adversaries and strategic rivals," says former CIA officer Douglas London. "Only human intelligence provides an understanding of how the information was acquired and the agent's motivation for sharing it." Acquiring HUMINT, as it's known in the business, is exactly what the coronavirus is making more difficult.

While the front lines of American espionage are taking the hardest hit, the headquarters of the CIA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) in the Virginia suburbs of Washington haven't been spared from the pandemic's impact as they, like much of the American workforce, shift to operating remotely. ODNI, which oversees all 17 U.S. intelligence agencies, is adjusting to COVID-19 by reducing staff contact through measures including "staggered shifts, flexible schedules and social-distancing practices" while "continuing to meet mission requirements," an ODNI spokesperson says.

'It's hard enough to maintain your cover in a crowded city.'

U.S. INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

BUT WORKING-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS in multiple agencies said several of those agencies were ill-prepared to follow those guidelines, despite having warned the government of the dangers of a possible viral pandemic for years.

Spies working from home still need to protect classified information, especially as China, Russia, Iran, North Korea and others improve their hacking skills. Some conversations can be held on encrypted cell phones, but the secret networks the agencies use to exchange classified information are too expensive to install in most homes. Any intel that is classified "top secret" can be discussed only in special rooms scattered around government agencies, office buildings, military bases, embassies and other locations. Officials continue to gather in them despite the pandemic.

"I suppose you could call it ironic," a third U.S. official says with a shrug. "But the institutions that are charged with preparing the country for possible threats were poorly prepared for this one." ◻

SPIES: MARK WILSON—GETTY IMAGES; EBOLA: DANIEL BEREHULAK—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

VIEWPOINT

Five key lessons from the fight against Ebola

By Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Dr. Raj Panjabi

WHILE COUNTRIES WITH ADVANCED HEALTH CARE systems struggle in the fight against COVID-19, its effects on countries with weaker health systems, including Liberia and other parts of Africa, will be significant. We were directly engaged in Liberia's Ebola epidemic from 2014 to 2016, which claimed the lives of more than 11,000 people and resulted in massive economic losses.

Ebola taught us painful but valuable lessons that can help the world today.

SLOW DOWN THE VIRUS. Take swift action to temporarily ban public gatherings. To slow Ebola's spread, in August 2014, the government of Liberia imposed a curfew to reduce movements and virus transmission. Evidence shows measures to keep people apart (a.k.a. "social distancing"), such as temporarily closing bars and restaurants and prohibiting public gatherings, can slow coronavirus too. China dramatically reduced its daily cases by implementing such actions. In considering such measures, concerns about being criticized for overreacting get in the way of a speedy response. But when the safety of their people is at stake, leaders must overcome their fears and act with no regrets.

TEST, TEST, TEST. Rapidly scale up testing and bring it close to your residents' homes. Early on in Liberia's Ebola epidemic, testing was not available in the country. Samples were shipped to reference labs elsewhere the region. This created delays in detecting the spread of Ebola. The Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of Congo was aided by deploying rapid testing as close to the community as possible. South Korea's drive-through test centers helped that country detect those with coronavirus and isolate them to reduce its spread. As rapid coronavirus test kits become available, outreach nurses and community-health workers can be trained—and equipped with protective gear—to test patients at or near patients' homes.

PROTECT HEALTH WORKERS. EBOLA KILLED NEARLY 1 OUT OF 10 OF LIBERIA'S HEALTH CARE WORKERS. Contracting the illness doesn't only lower the number of workers available to fight the virus, it also shatters the spirits of those left on the front lines. Health workers, 70% of whom are women, get sick when they lack protective equipment like gloves, gowns and masks. A nurse without a mask is like a soldier without a helmet—neither stands a chance against their enemy. By working with partners to scale up distribution of protective gear, we were able to lower the rate of Ebola infections among health workers. Coronavirus anywhere is a threat to people everywhere. The World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund is working to ensure doctors, nurses and community health workers in low-income countries have the gear and training they need.

Doctors Without Borders workers suit up in protective clothing before entering an Ebola ward at the Elwa Hospital in Monrovia, Liberia, in 2014

REPURPOSE PARTS OF GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE MILITARY, TO SUPPORT EPIDEMIC RESPONSE. At the peak of Liberia's Ebola epidemic, hundreds of people fell sick every week. Hospitals in Monrovia were overwhelmed, and we ran out of treatment beds. To rapidly increase the availability of hospital beds, we used our military to work with the U.S. military to construct Ebola treatment centers, dramatically increasing our hospital-bed capacity.

PLAN FOR RECOVERY NOW BY FOCUSING ON THOSE MOST AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMIC BLOW. The 2014–2016 Ebola epidemic cost $53 billion in losses in West Africa. Liberia began to plan for post-Ebola recovery during the crisis. In response to COVID-19, the U.S. has announced it will give billions of dollars in economic relief. But many low-income countries simply will not have the capacity to cushion the pandemic's economic blow. The U.N. and partners should consider an economic-recovery initiative to support the most vulnerable in these countries.

When epidemics strike, fear, anxiety and despair can be agonizing. But we are not defined by the conditions we face, no matter how hopeless they seem—we are defined by how we respond to them. Decisive political leadership and global cooperation will determine if we win the war against this invisible enemy.

Sirleaf is the former President of Liberia and the World Health Organization's goodwill ambassador for health workforce. Panjabi is CEO of Last Mile Health and an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School

Moneyland has lost its bearings

By Zachary Karabell

FOR WEEKS, I WATCHED THE EVOLVING CORONAVIRUS crisis the way one observes an avalanche: it looks distant until suddenly it is upon you. I was inclined to take advantage and "buy the dips." Then, something snapped: I started selling. I wanted cash. I panicked.

There. I said it. And I'm saying it to dispel the idea that the response of markets to what is happening is based on cold calculation of the future. It is based right now on a complicated mix of legitimate recalibration of what the economic future holds and pure unmitigated fear of loss. The former is absolutely necessary. The latter is utterly destructive. U.S. equity indices lost more than $10 trillion.

I have been an investor for almost 20 years. Through the bursting of the dotcom bubble, 9/11 and the resulting recession, and then during the massive financial collapse of 2008–2009, I never really got scared. This time, I did. In financialland, selling and fleeing to cash is the real-world equivalent of hoarding toilet paper: it seems to make individual sense, but collectively it is nonsensical. We aren't running out of toilet paper, unless we all try to buy it simultaneously. We aren't going to run out of cash and liquidity in financial markets unless everyone tries to liquidate at once.

The challenge now in the financial markets is that you have multiple players—individuals, large funds, banks and other financial institutions—resetting every expectation of what the future will look like, and having to do so in real time. Usually, recessions send out early signals such as rising unemployment or slowing retail sales or creeping inflation. Models and projections start to adjust. Interest rates and the ease of credit begin to reflect changed expectations. None of that was much in evidence five weeks ago. The coronavirus was a nearly unmodelable event. If you exist in moneyland, lack of clarity about what to expect is one of the more toxic ingredients. It can lead investors to try to calculate worst-case scenarios.

In moneyland, as well as in real life, there is always a range of probable to possible. Stocks, bonds, homes, businesses are all priced to reflect the best judgment at any given time about what the future holds. We look to past patterns to assess probabilities and set prices accordingly. That's never an exact science, which is why there is so often such intense disagreement among finance professionals about what things are actually worth.

THESE ARE NOT normal times. There is no recent correlate with a global pandemic halting commerce and upending daily life since the 1918 Spanish flu. The possible range has exploded, with some wondering whether markets have reached a bottom or the bottom is still way down. In that sense, what is happening now in financial markets in response to the contagion is similar to what unfolded in 2008–2009.

As each of us contemplates what to do with money right now, it's important to pause, breathe and recognize that there is an unequivocal distinction between what is happening now and every other major financial and economic crisis: governments are acting to spend aggressively with a level of funding and measures that dwarf previous responses to serious crises. The Federal Reserve is providing almost limitless liquidity; Congress and the White House are negotiating to pass bills that could distribute some $2 trillion; similar efforts are under way in almost every country affected.

Will that prevent markets from falling further as the data rolls in of millions laid off and hundreds of billions of evaporated revenue? Who knows? But in a crisis, markets die when people scramble for cash, and they revive when some sense of the worst becomes clear. We may not be there yet, but we are getting there.

Karabell is an investor and writer

3
Number of years of economic growth wiped out by the coronavirus market crash in March 2020

56%
Drop in the S&P 500, from peak in January 2007 to trough in March 2009, during the last recession

78%
Decline of Nasdaq, from high in March 2000 to low in October 2002, during dotcom-bubble collapse

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CORONAVIRUS

THE STORM CRASHES IN

HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS CHANGING AMERICAN LIFE

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE BENNETT

A health care worker prepares to help patients at a drive-in center in Jericho, N.Y., on March 18

NATION

‘I’M MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED’

Life on the front lines for under-equipped health care workers

BY ABBY VESOULIS

In the southeast florida emergency room where 62-year-old nurse Penny Blake works, hospital administrators have locked up gloves, cleaning supplies and masks to keep them from disappearing. Twelve hundred miles away, at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, health care providers struggle with a similar dilemma. Faced with too few N95 respirators—specialized masks that are supposed to be worn for only up to eight hours—health care workers have begun hoarding them. Some doctors are spraying their masks with Lysol and keeping them in their lockers overnight. “Once you get one, the feeling is you keep it for as long as you can,” says Sinai’s Dr. Michelle Lin.

In more than a dozen interviews with TIME, medical professionals from Los Angeles to Pittsburgh painted a picture of scarce resources, growing anxieties and frustrations with the government for failing to adequately prepare them for going to battle with the coronavirus. Chief among their concerns was the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, gowns and eye protection. With more than 53,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the U.S. so far, a lack of this gear means frontline health care workers face a higher risk of exposure to the virus—which, in turn, means they may accidentally expose other patients, their own families and their colleagues precisely when hospitals can least afford to have critical personnel on the sidelines.

“The biggest concern we have is that we will not have enough personal protective equipment to take care of the number of patients that are coming in,” says Blake. “And if we can’t protect ourselves, then we’re not going to be able to be there for them.”

Dr. Matthew Baldwin, a critical-care physician and pulmonary specialist at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, says he expects the problem to get worse. “We’ve had an exponential increase in the number of patients that have been hospitalized in the last 48 hours,” he told TIME on March 21. “I think there’s genuine concern now, that in the near future, we will run out of personal protective equipment.”

On March 24, President Trump announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency would distribute 8 million N95 masks to address nationwide shortages. But that figure pales in comparison to the demand. If this pandemic lasts a year, health care providers will require roughly 3.5 billion of the masks, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Critics say the President could replenish the U.S. stockpile of PPE by using the Defense Production Act, a 70-year-old law that allows him to order companies to prioritize government contracts and produce equipment necessary to protect national security. But he has so far resisted. While he invoked the law, Trump has largely avoided calling on specific companies to participate, suggesting that doing so would be tantamount to “nationalizing” industry.

Instead, he says, state leaders should source most of their PPE on their own. The government is not “a shipping clerk,” he said on March 19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, meanwhile, published guidance on March 17 indicating that “as a last resort,” health care providers “might use homemade masks (e.g., bandana, scarf) for care of patients with COVID-19.”

Facing an onslaught of potential new hospitalizations, Blake expresses disappointment in the government for failing to prepare. “It is part of the federal government’s responsibility,” she says, “to ensure that there are resources out there for protection of their citizens.”

IN THE ABSENCE of a coherent national response, states and hospitals are scrambling to ration and reuse what PPE they have. “Basically, I’ve been told to wear that same N95 respirator mask for 24 hours,” an

Health care providers donning protective gear rest before administering COVID-19 tests

PREVIOUS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE: STEVE PFOST—NEWSDAY/GETTY IMAGES

emergency physician working in a Tennessee hospital said. "And if it doesn't get contaminated, [I'm] supposed to reuse it the next day." One New York anesthesiologist said his team was asked to use just one N95 per week. Under normal circumstances, he said, he would use one per patient to prevent the spread of disease.

In Los Angeles County, where there are at least 662 confirmed patients and 11 deaths, hospital administrators suggested that health care workers source their own PPE. "We have been encouraged to go to Home Depot and buy our own eyewear," a Los Angeles nurse says. Due to a shortage in blood-drive donations, she and her colleagues have also been asked to give blood. She ruefully quips that her job is literally blood, sweat and tears.

In Pittsburgh, a labor and delivery nurse says her team is now permitted to wear surgical masks only during cesarean sections, despite frequent visits from other staff and unscreened patients who come from at-risk floors. "I'm mentally and physically exhausted," the nurse says. "I'm here to help the community, but at the same time, I'm probably exposing them." Other health care providers worry about exposing one another: doctors and nurses tend to work in close quarters, touching the same keyboards, clipboards and doorknobs.

That's a problem for each provider, says former CDC director Dr. Tom Frieden, but it's also a problem for society writ large. "Ultimately, health care providers can't save your life if they can't protect their own, and they need adequate supplies of personal protective equipment to do it," he tells TIME.

The lack of PPE has cascading effects, several health care workers explain. Because there are so few N95 masks, hospital administrators are making their supply difficult to access, leaving doctors and nurses in the lurch. Recently, when the Tennessee emergency physician was treating a critically ill patient with a high risk of blood contamination, she couldn't find any masks with face shields. "That was scary," she says.

Not being prepared with basic protective equipment also compounds the psychological challenges of combating an invisible enemy in the midst of a global pandemic. "It's pretty overwhelming," says the Tennessee doctor, through tears. "This is the most anxious I've ever felt in my entire life."

In Italy, where COVID-19 has killed more than 6,500 people, many doctors have been forced to make gut-wrenching decisions about which of their patients get a ventilator, a lifesaving breathing machine, and which do not. Areas in both Italy and the U.S. face a critical shortage of the device. "What I'd like to tell my American colleagues is, Be prepared for the amount of deaths you will see," says Roberto Tonelli, a 31-year-old pulmonologist in Modena, Italy.

Back in Florida, Blake is already watching Italy closely. "Right now, those of us in health care, we all have pre-traumatic stress disorder," she says. "We know what's coming, and we know it's going to be a storm." Blake understands that being in her 60s puts her at an increased risk if she contracts COVID-19, but she has no plans to take herself off the front lines.

"I went into nursing because I wanted to help people," she says. "I've got to get in there and use my personal protective equipment." Hopefully there will be enough of it. —*With reporting by* FRANCESCA TRIANNI/ORLANDO *and* HALEY SWEETLAND EDWARDS/NEW YORK

HEALTH

THE COST OF TREATMENT

As tens of thousands fall ill in the U.S., patients brace for big bills

BY ABIGAIL ABRAMS

MARK PETERSON—REDUX

WHEN DANNI ASKINI STARTED FEELING CHEST pain, shortness of breath and a migraine all at once on a Saturday in late February, she called the oncologist who had been treating her lymphoma. Her doctor thought she might be reacting poorly to a new medication, so she sent Askini to a Boston-area emergency room. There, doctors told her it was likely pneumonia and sent her home.

Over the next several days, Askini saw her temperature spike and drop, and she developed a gurgling cough. After two more trips to the ER, Askini was given yet another test and again sent home. She waited three more days for the results, and on the seventh day of her illness, she at last had a diagnosis: COVID-19.

A few days later, the medical bills started rolling in. The total: $34,927.43. "I was pretty sticker-shocked," Askini says. "I personally don't know anybody who has that kind of money."

Like 27 million other Americans, Askini is uninsured. Until recently, she had insurance under Medicaid, which covered her cancer treatment, but she gave it up when she got a new job in Washington, D.C., that she was supposed to start in March. The coronavirus outbreak upended those plans, so Askini has reapplied for Medicaid, hoping her recent treatment will be retroactively covered. If not, she'll be on the hook.

She won't be alone. Public-health experts predict that hundreds of thousands and possibly more than a million people across the U.S. will need to be hospitalized for COVID-19 in the near future. With unemployment skyrocketing and countless people losing their employer-based insurance, Congress on March 25 was working to reach an agreement on a package of aid to individuals and businesses—but health care costs were not a focus of the discussion. A previously passed piece of legislation, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, covered testing costs but didn't address the cost of treatment.

While most people infected with COVID-19 will not require hospitalization, according to the World Health Organization, those who need to go to the ICU should brace for big bills—no matter what kind of insurance they have. A new analysis from the Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that the average cost of COVID-19 treatment for a patient with employer-based insurance, and without complications, would be about $9,763. For a patient with complications, bills could be about double that: $20,292. The researchers came up with those numbers by examining average costs of hospital admissions for people with pneumonia.

Congress has mandated free COVID-19 testing but has not addressed the cost of getting treated

Most private health-insurance plans are likely to cover the bulk of services needed to treat COVID-19, experts say. But many insured Americans will still pay thousands to cover their deductibles, co-pays or co-insurance costs. More than 80% of people in the U.S. with employer insurance have deductibles, and last year the average annual deductible for a single person in that category was $1,655. For plans purchased by individuals, the costs are often higher: the average deductible for a bronze plan in 2019 was $5,861, according to HealthPocket, a site that helps people shop for insurance. Co-pays and co-insurance, meanwhile, are usually 15% to 20% of the cost for in-network providers, and much more for out-of-network ones.

All told, patients with employer-based insurance can expect total out-of-pocket costs of more than $1,300, the Kaiser researchers found. That may look like a bargain compared with Askini's nearly $35,000 bill, but with people losing jobs and the economy grinding to a halt, even a smaller bill could upend many U.S. families. As it is, nearly 40% of Americans can't scrape together $400 for an unexpected expense, according to the Federal Reserve Board.

Americans on Medicare and Medicaid will face different challenges. While the cost of COVID-19

treatment is likely to be covered, the details on Medicare deductibles and potential co-pays will again depend on people's Medicare plans or state-specific Medicaid rules.

For those, like Askini, who are uninsured, the options are limited. Some hospitals offer charity-care programs, and some states are making moves to help residents access coverage. A growing number of states have created "special enrollment periods" to allow more people to sign up for Affordable Care Act marketplace insurance plans midyear.

The U.S. Congress has been debating various measures to deal with treatment costs, but none of them appeared to be central to the $2 trillion package lawmakers were negotiating on March 25 for imminent passage. Summaries of the bill showed $100 billion in funds allotted for hospitals, moves to boost access to telehealth services, coverage of coronavirus-related vaccines with no cost sharing, and an attempt to cut down on surprise billing. But these would not address treatment costs, and gaps remain.

Patient advocates suggest families keep an eye out for cost savings where possible. For example, they advise people who suspect they have COVID-19 to call their doctor before going to the emergency room. In many cases, doctors will advise that even patients exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, like fever and cough, stay home to recover. In cases that require hospitalization, patients should be prepared to be charged a "facilities fee" upon walking through the door. Askini's first trip to the hospital in Boston on Feb. 29, for example, included a $1,804 charge for her ER visit and an additional $3,841.07 for "hospital services."

Patient advocates also advise watching out for unexpected charges for imaging or lab tests, which can be "out of network" even if the doctor is not. Patients should attempt to get all information in writing so that they can appeal bills if necessary, says Caitlin Donovan of the National Patient Advocate Foundation. And appealing is worth it. Providers and insurers often reverse or lower bills when patients negotiate or go public.

These problems aren't new. Before the pandemic, Americans faced high health care costs compared with the rest of the world, and millions already delayed medical care as a result. But with COVID-19 sweeping the country, this old problem may exacerbate the new one: by attempting to sidestep health care costs, many Americans may avoid being tested or treated for the virus, making the outbreak worse in the end.

"If you're sick, you need fewer barriers," Donovan says. "But also, it doesn't help society to have people still crawling around going to their job and getting other people sick." —*With reporting by* ALANA ABRAMSON/WASHINGTON

THE HIDDEN COST OF FREE TESTING

ANALYSIS

BY ABIGAIL ABRAMS

JENA STARKES IS REALISTIC about the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presents to her family. The 45-year-old lives with her 81-year-old mother in Brooklyn, and if either of them contracts the virus, they're in trouble. "If I get it and I give it to her, it is unlikely that she would survive," Starkes says. But if Starkes gets it and needs to be hospitalized, she'd have a problem too. "What if I had to be ventilated?" she says. "What if I had to pay $300 for a test? I literally could not."

Starkes owns her own web-design business, so she neither receives employer-based insurance nor qualifies for Medicaid. But she can't afford to buy an individual plan on the marketplace. So, like tens of millions of other Americans, she's facing down a global pandemic without heath insurance.

On March 18, Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which addresses a small slice of this problem: the cost of finding out if you've got COVID-19 in the first place. The law requires that all existing insurers—Medicare, Medicaid, other government plans and most private insurance—cover all COVID-19 testing and testing-related services. That means no co-pays, no deductibles, no co-insurance charges: free. That's supposed to be true even if you don't have insurance, like Starkes. The law provided $1 billion to reimburse medical providers for uninsured patients' testing, and it allows states to choose to pay for uninsured residents' COVID-19 testing through their Medicaid programs.

But patient advocates say it's not that easy. There are plenty of other ways the law fails to protect people, even if you have insurance. The law says that insurers must cover patient visits to doctors' offices, urgent-care centers, telehealth platforms or emergency rooms, so long as the services "relate to the furnishing or administration" of a COVID-19 test or "to the evaluation of such individual for purposes of determining the need" of a test. That means that if your visit does not result in a COVID-19 test, you may end up with a bill. It also means that if you get tested somewhere that is not in your insurance plan's network, you may end up with a bill. And if you receive any treatment that is not directly related to COVID-19 testing, you may, once again, end up paying.

"When your health plan has to cover [testing], that just means the health plan has to cover what it would say is a reasonable charge," explains Karen Pollitz, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. "The difference between what your health plan thinks is reasonable and what the provider bills you, that's on you."

The law also covers only testing starting the day it was enacted, March 18. So if you got tested before then, those services are not required to be covered.

That may seem unfair, but Starkes is unsurprised. "That sucks. But that's America," she says.

INTO THE BREACH

Businesses scramble to fill critical supply shortages—and search for guidance from the feds

BY CHARLOTTE ALTER AND W.J. HENNIGAN

EVERYTHING CHANGED FOR ABDUL Rashid Dadabhoy on March 17. He heard that California's Orange County was gearing up to ban public gatherings and impose restrictions on nonessential businesses like his T-shirt company, Bayside Apparel and Headwear, in order to stop the spread of coronavirus. But then Dadabhoy turned on CNN and saw doctors saying they didn't have enough personal protective equipment to keep themselves safe while treating patients.

"I have all these employees," Dadabhoy recalls thinking to himself. "I've got to do something." Within a day, the company had a face-mask prototype. Soon it was aiming to produce 100,000 masks per week. The masks are not yet medical-grade, but they're better than nothing, and Bayside is donating them to hospitals that need them.

From underwear manufacturers to haute couture brands, apparel companies across the country have pivoted to help fill the need for medical gear. A global effort is under way to ramp up production of crucial supplies. Breweries and perfume factories are making hand sanitizer. Local businesses that own 3-D printers are fabricating face shields. Dadabhoy has ordered medical-grade fabric in order to join Hanes and Fruit of the Loom in manufacturing face masks that meet federal contracting standards.

This vast struggle reflects the best of American ingenuity, as former competitors put profit aside to work together in the national interest. But the ground-up response also underscores the lack of federal coordination amid an urgent crisis. More than two months after the COVID-19 epidemic arrived in the U.S., the Trump Administration has no unified national strategy to get vital supplies into the hands of frontline health workers. Companies hoping to contribute their efforts face a disorganized federal process that is riddled with bottlenecks and hampered by unclear lines of authority. And as the disease's spread accelerates in the coming weeks, deepening shortages of equipment from masks to ventilators are becoming a matter of life and death.

A chorus of politicians, state government officials and medical experts are pleading with President Trump to use his authority under the Defense Production Act (DPA) to command U.S. private production capacity to manufacture medical supplies. Trump invoked the act on March 18, but he later cast it as an unnecessary government intrusion, and the Administration has yet to harness the act's full powers to nationalize production lines.

Without the federal government at the controls, market forces are often making the situation worse. Governors from the hardest-hit states say they're locked in counterproductive bidding wars to acquire supplies from distributors. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said the state is paying $7 for masks that once cost 85¢. "The President says it's a war," Cuomo said. "Well, act like it's a war."

THE SHORTAGE OF CRUCIAL SUPPLIES should be no surprise. The Department of Health and Human Services warned that the U.S. would need roughly 3.5 billion masks to combat the pandemic. "If we had started this in January, when we became aware of this, instead of futzing around for two months, we would be in a much better position," says a former Commerce Department official.

The American Hospital Association, American Medical Association and American Nurses Association jointly wrote a letter March 21 to Trump, urging him to use the DPA to produce the supplies that "all frontline providers so desperately need." In New York, which has become the epicenter of the outbreak in the U.S., Cuomo says 30,000 additional ventilators are needed to treat the crush of severely ill patients. The state's rate of new infections was doubling every three days. "I do not for the life of me understand the reluctance to use the federal Defense Production Act," Cuomo said March 24.

Signed by President Harry Truman in 1950, the statute sought to update the War Powers Acts of World War II for the modern era. Its sweeping authorities allow the President to force businesses to accept and prioritize government contracts during natural

LINDSEY WASSON—REUTERS

An employee on the assembly line at Ventec Life Systems in Bothell, Wash., which is ramping up its production of ventilators

disasters, terrorist attacks and other emergencies. During World War II, cities like Detroit became known as the "Arsenal of Democracy" after automakers transformed their plants to assemble warplanes, tanks and other heavy equipment.

To tackle COVID-19, government agencies such as the departments of Defense and Health and Human Services have made use of some of the act's contracting and loan provisions. But the biggest tool at the President's disposal, nationalizing equipment production, remains unused. "We're a country not based on nationalizing our business," Trump said March 22. "Call a person over in Venezuela, ask them how did nationalization of their businesses work out. Not too well."

His faith in markets as a more efficient means of allocating resources is supported by the business community, which dislikes the idea of being forced to manufacture products. The DPA "isn't a magic wand to immediately solving medical supply shortages" and won't result in producing "highly specialized manufacturing equipment overnight," the U.S. Chamber of Commerce argued.

Instead, Trump is convinced that the best way to meet demand for equipment is by cajoling automakers, medical-device manufacturers and other industrial firms to step up. In some cases, it's worked. After Vice President Mike Pence made a high-profile visit to 3M, the firm said it would nearly double mask production to an annual rate of 2 billion worldwide. Honeywell also committed to boosting its capacity to make masks. General Motors is exploring a partnership with Ventec Life Systems, a small Seattle-area company that makes ventilators. "The phone has been ringing off the hook, and our team has been working literally around the clock," says Chris Brooks, chief strategy officer of Ventec.

But manufacturing experts say the Administration's attention to big corporations hasn't extended to smaller manufacturers, who often can switch gears more quickly. There's no centralized database of companies or nationwide mechanism for identifying suppliers who could help produce crucial equipment. Industry and state officials are building their own "matchmaking" services to connect manufacturers with suppliers, but small companies have struggled to figure out how to pitch in. "A lot of the confusion out there is, 'I'm willing to do this, but I can't do it for free, I need some training and some new equipment, and I need to find the regulations,'" says Carrie Hines, president and CEO of the American Small Manufacturers Coalition. "It's mass confusion."

Without a federal clearinghouse, manufacturers don't know what needs to be made and to what specifications. That could leave hospitals with an influx of donated equipment they can't use. "The companies might say, 'I can really make this,' but they're not sure what requirement or standard they have to perform to in order to get that done," says Carla Bailo, president and CEO of the Center for Automotive Research. Standardization is especially important for medical equipment, she adds, because it could hurt someone if it's not correctly made.

Dadabhoy's T-shirt factory has added 30 machines to ramp up face-mask production despite the lack of government direction. When California officials announced an email address for companies to help, "I responded to the email address immediately," Dadabhoy says. "And nobody has responded to my email." ◻

Mosijah Roye, 15, right, and Iyeoshujah, 11, the photographer's sons, follow online classes in New York on March 23 on their home devices

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUDDY ROYE FOR TIME

EDUCATION

THE ONLINE LEARNING DIVIDE

School closures are leaving students without home computers or Internet behind

BY KATIE REILLY

WHEN NEW YORK CITY CLOSED SCHOOLS to combat the coronavirus outbreak and ordered remote learning for its more than 1 million students, English teacher Stephanie Paz wasn't worried about how she would virtually teach her ninth-graders to take notes in the margins of their books or how they would discuss each other's essays without being in the same room. Her biggest concern was whether they would have the basic technology needed to access their virtual lessons.

Paz teaches at a school in the Bronx, where she says more than half her students did not have a computer or Internet at home when the transition to online learning was announced in mid-March. The school handed out laptops to some students but did not have enough for everyone before remote learning began on March 23, so others got paper learning packets.

"I am concerned that, in 2020, all of our students don't have access to technology or Internet at home," Paz says. "I worry that, as a district, we haven't prioritized that. And as a nation, we haven't prioritized that."

She is right to be concerned. As the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads, the nation's K-12 schools and colleges have been forced to weigh health recommendations against the needs of students, many of whom are caught in the digital divide separating those who have Internet access and those who do not. About 15% of U.S. households with school-age children lack high-speed Internet access,

according to a Pew Research Center analysis of 2015 Census Bureau data. Rural communities lag behind urban areas, as do tribal lands, where about a third of people don't have high-speed Internet, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Dozens of broadband companies have signed on to the FCC's Keep Americans Connected pledge for 60 days, agreeing to waive late fees, to refrain from terminating service for homes and small businesses in arrears on bills and to open wi-fi hot spots. Some are also offering free Internet to households with K-12 and college students and to low-income families who are new customers.

But advocates have called on them and on the government to do more. "It still leaves millions of American children disconnected," Gigi Sohn, a distinguished fellow at the Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law and Policy, says of the offer. "And by the way, what happens when the 60 days are over?"

Sohn, who worked for the FCC under the Obama Administration and who testified about digital inequality before Congress in January, says in the short term, the FCC and Congress should increase broadband subsidies and make more funds available for schools and libraries to provide Internet-enabled devices and hot spots to low-income students. She says more companies should lift data caps and provide low-cost broadband options.

"This relief cannot come fast enough," says Sohn. Compounding the coronavirus crisis: many families count on K-12 schools for free or subsidized meals and other social services and rely on colleges for housing and income from work-study jobs.

By late March, 46 states had closed all schools, and at least 54.8 million K-12 students were either trying remote learning or not getting any instruction at all, according to Education Week. Several districts have said they might not reopen this school year.

"It's something I could not in a million years have imagined having to do," New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said on March 15 when he announced the closure of the nation's largest school district. He acknowledged that many households lacked the technology for digital learning and would suffer economic hardship if working parents had to arrange childcare.

The city's department of education is working to lend 300,000 Internet-enabled iPads to students in coming weeks, but thousands did not have the technology needed for remote learning when it began.

Alyssa Roye—the principal of a Brooklyn elementary school many of whose students live in public housing—expects it could take weeks for her school's roughly 100 students to get the equipment they need to fully participate in online learning.

In the days leading up to the remote-learning transition, she called every family with a child in her school to ask if the home had computers and Internet access. Only a handful did. For everyone else, she filled out an online form for them to request an iPad from the department of education.

Her own family's situation highlights the disparities that exist not only between affluent and low-income school districts but also between schools in the same district, where funding is unevenly distributed and some neighborhoods might benefit from generous parent donations.

Roye's two sons have a computer and a tablet to use at home, and they attend public schools in New York City that were already well equipped for online learning. Since remote classes began, they have been able to log on at the required times and participate in video chats with their teachers and classmates. The pandemic, she says, has made the digital divide "more glaring than ever."

In some parts of the country, school officials have avoided or ended online learning because of those disparities. "If that's not available to all children, we cannot make that available for some," said William R. Hite Jr., the superintendent of Philadelphia schools, when announcing that students would not be required to submit online assignments.

The Oregon department of education told schools that if they implemented distance learning, it must be accessible to all students, including those without Internet access or computers and those with special-education needs. "You cannot open a 'brick-and-mortar' school in Oregon unless it is accessible to every student in their school district. The same rules apply to an online school," Marc Siegel, spokesperson for the Oregon department of education, said in an email. "Online learning in a school district cannot be implemented with an 'access for some' mindset."

BUT EVEN IN SOME of the country's most comfortable suburbs near high-tech urban centers, online equality is elusive. Take Bothell, Wash., an affluent bedroom community near Seattle, which began online learning on March 9 for 23,000 students in the Northshore school district.

For some parents, the transition went smoothly. Grace Jurado borrowed a couple Chromebooks from the school district, which had about 4,000 to lend out, and set them up at her dining-room table. Her three children, in sixth, eighth and 11th grades, worked through their lessons every day for a week. One of her daughters recorded YouTube videos for choir. Her son video-chatted with his friends to figure out how to attack their homework assignments. They all took a break at the end of the day to take their dogs for a walk.

But Amy Amirault found it impossible to give one-on-one help to her 14-year-old son Daniel, who has autism and behavioral challenges, while "running from kid to kid" to help her three younger children follow their online classes.

Northshore superintendent Michelle Reid

Roye, a school principal, and sons Mosijah and Iyeoshujah on day one of remote learning

ultimately ended online learning after five days. In an email to parents, she cited the inequities it had highlighted, in areas from special-education services to childcare to Internet access.

Other districts have raised similar concerns, questioning whether remote learning violates civil rights laws related to educating children with disabilities, who might struggle to use online tools or need more help than a parent can provide. But in guidance issued March 21, U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said those concerns should not stop schools from offering distance learning during "this time of unprecedented national emergency."

Jessica King, a single mother of two in Chicago, where schools are closed until April 21, says the disparities will worsen the disadvantages already facing low-income students, whose K-12 opportunities can help or drastically hinder their chances of going on to college. Making just $15 an hour as a teaching assistant in a Catholic school, King does not have a home computer and cannot afford Internet to access the optional online assignments recommended for her 6-year-old son, who has ADHD and a behavioral disorder. "We already deal with the achievement gap," she says. "But now it's just like it's going to widen."

The problem is not confined to K-12 schools. Hundreds of colleges have transitioned to online learning even though not all students have easy access to wi-fi off campus.

Delaney Anderson, a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, Morris, is one of them. The university has asked students to move out of dorms and stay off campus unless they don't have a safe place to go, but wi-fi at home on the Fond du Lac reservation is spotty at best. "It's difficult to play a YouTube video," Anderson says, "let alone a lecture."

As they wrestle with remote-learning challenges, many teachers say they're trying to continue students' educations and provide a sense of normality, while recognizing the new hurdles children could be facing beyond school—whether their parents were laid off, their younger siblings now need babysitters, or their relatives have contracted the virus.

On her first day teaching remotely in New York City, Paz says her priority was checking in with students, who seemed overwhelmed, before bombarding them with new learning material. She took attendance, shared a video welcoming students to online learning and asked them to complete a journal entry on how they were feeling about their new normal.

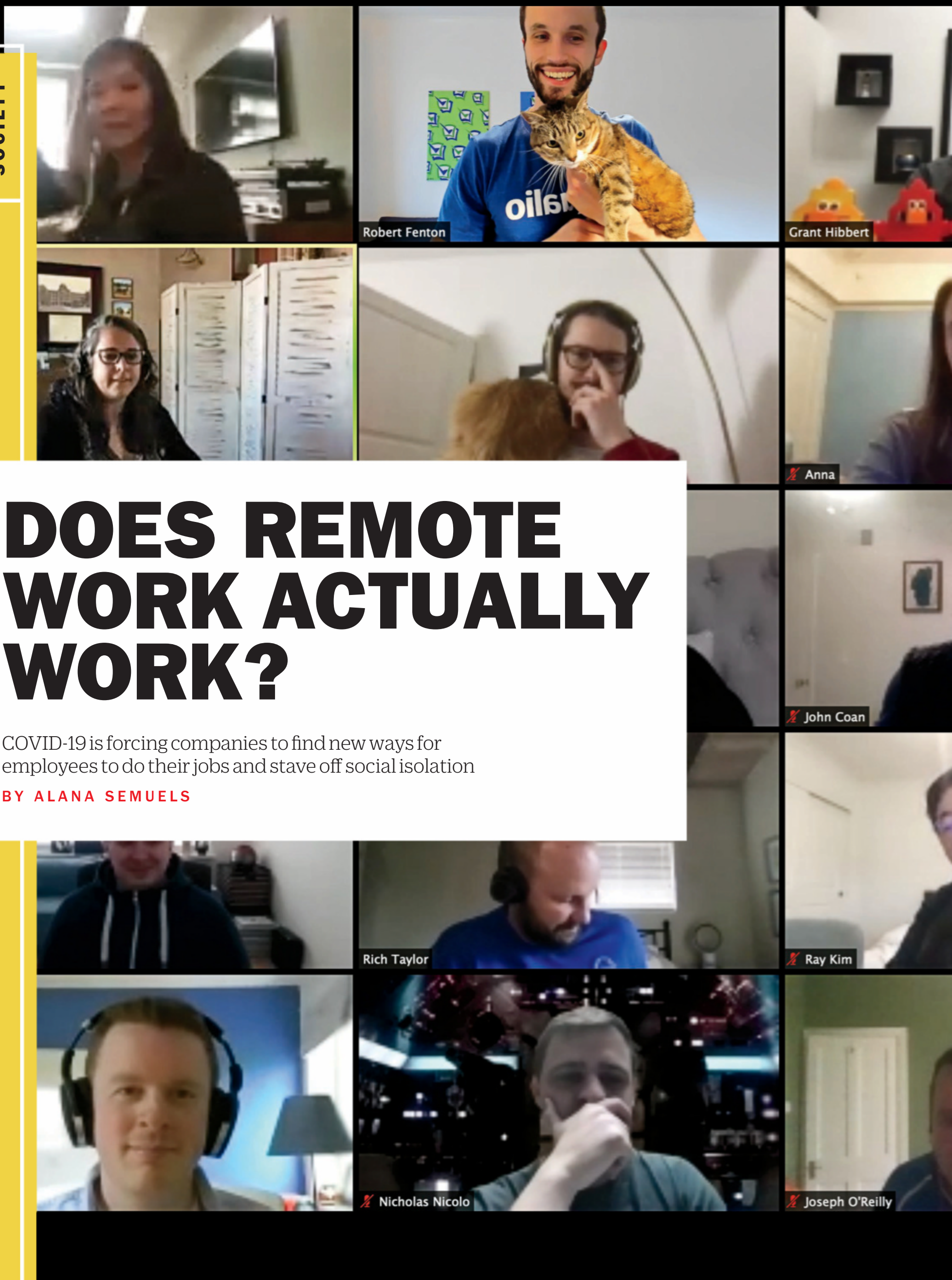
"We have to be flexible," Paz says. "We have to remember that our students are human beings in the midst of a global crisis. And the same way that it's stressing us out, it's stressing them out." ◻

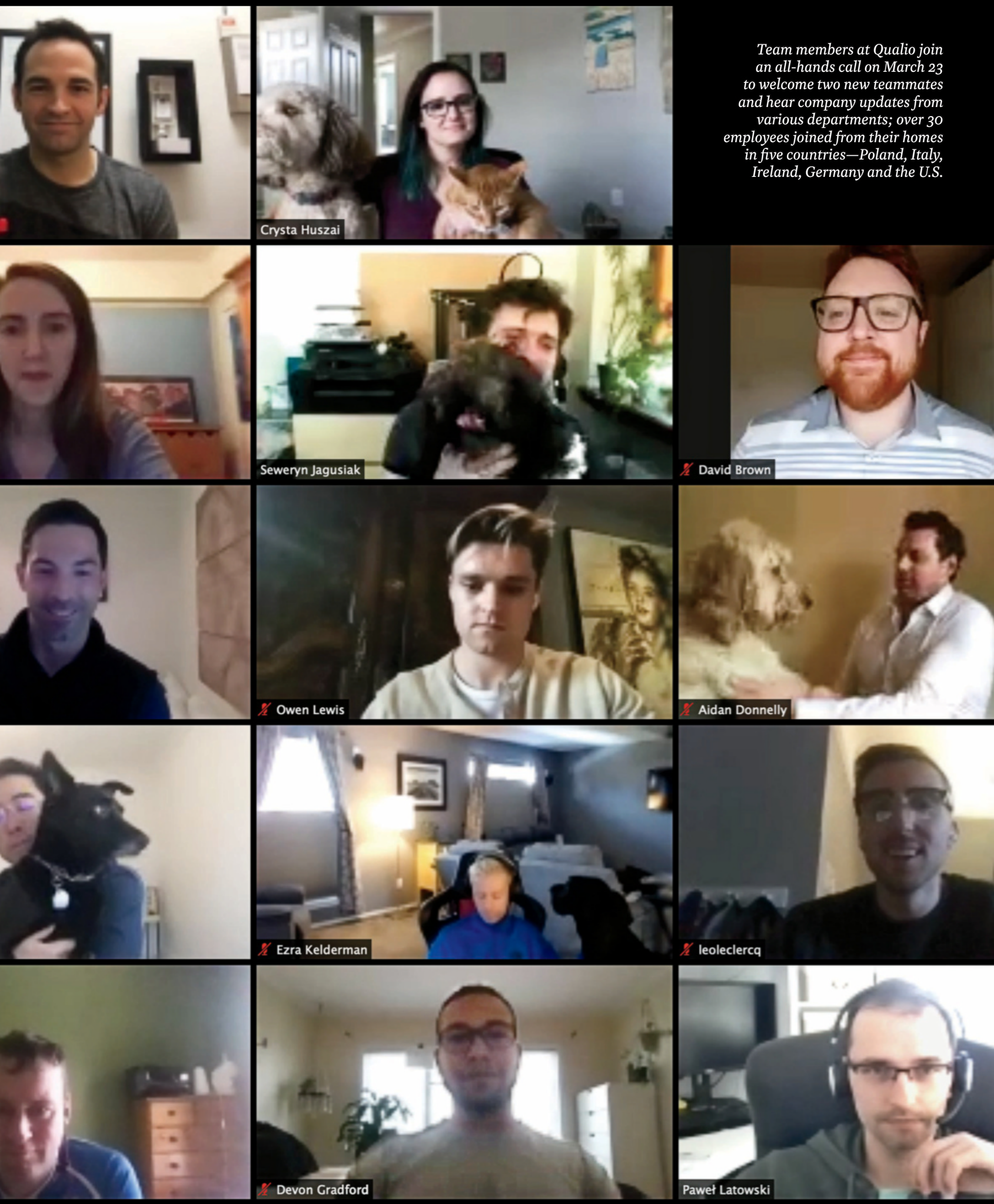
SOCIETY

DOES REMOTE WORK ACTUALLY WORK?

COVID-19 is forcing companies to find new ways for employees to do their jobs and stave off social isolation

BY ALANA SEMUELS





Team members at Qualio join an all-hands call on March 23 to welcome two new teammates and hear company updates from various departments; over 30 employees joined from their homes in five countries—Poland, Italy, Ireland, Germany and the U.S.

I AM OBSERVING WHAT MAY BE THE FUTURE of work in a San Francisco skyscraper, watching a transparent, legless man in a T-shirt hover above a leather couch.

The man is Jacob Loewenstein, head of business at Spatial, a software company that enables meetings via holograms. Though he is in New York City, a 3-D image of him appears a few feet in front of me in San Francisco, his face and slightly tousled hair a good likeness of the photo I later look up on LinkedIn. As I turn my head, which is decked in a clunky augmented-reality headset, I see that Loewenstein is holding a tablet, which he hands to me. When I try to grab it, though, I end up drawing pink lines through the air instead—I've accidentally enabled a drawing tool in the app instead of the one that should allow my pinched fingers to grasp an object. Other Spatial employees also wearing headsets in the San Francisco office are looking at a 3-D model of the surface of Mars. "When people teleport into a 3-D space, they can really feel that they're in the same room as someone, and they're sharing the space," Jinha Lee, Spatial's co-founder and chief product officer, tells me.

Of course, it's obvious that the image of Loewenstein is an avatar; though he floats at my height, his body evaporates where his hips should be, and I can see through his torso to a plant against the wall in the San Francisco office. We bump fists when we are introduced, but I feel nothing when the images of our hands meet, and at one point, when I look away, it appears from the corner of my eye that Loewenstein is being swallowed by the model of Mars. When he gives a thumbs-up to someone on a video screen, his arm looks like two drumsticks awkwardly glued together; when he talks and his teeth appear, they glow a bright greenish white. "Teeth are … not great," Spatial co-founder and CEO Anand Agarawala had said when he instructed me not to smile as a computer took a photo to create my 3-D avatar for the meeting, a grim version of my face that looks as if I've got a mouthful of sour milk.

Spatial is trying to solve a problem that is increasingly relevant in the age of anxiety about the coronavirus as more companies, as well as local and state governments, tell employees to work from home—it can be hard to connect with people if you're not in the same room. In this way, the company is facing the same challenges as other technology applications trying to make remote work actually work.

The number of people working from home has increased dramatically since COVID-19 began sweeping through the U.S. Alphabet, the parent company of Google, recommended that all of its employees in North America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East work from home until at least April 10. Amazon has told all employees globally who are able to work from home to do so. Other tech companies, including Twitter, Microsoft and Apple, have asked employees to work from home, as have dozens of smaller companies.

Spatial says its technology frees remote workers from staring at giant heads in tiny rectangles during videoconferencing and lets them see things in a more realistic way. Mattel has used Spatial so that toy designers can upload 3-D images of toys and have colleagues provide feedback. The BNP Paribas Real Estate group has used it to show clients 3-D models of land and buildings.

THERE ARE MORE COMPANIES than ever trying to make remote workers feel more connected, and they're gaining in popularity as the number of COVID-19 cases increases. Zoom, the video meeting software, saw its share price nearly double over the past month as usage jumped around the world, while Slack, which allows team members to chat on centralized instant-messaging software, says it added 7,000 paid customers—which includes companies and educational institutions—from Feb. 1 to March 18, a 40% jump over the two previous quarters. Microsoft Teams, which allows workers to video-chat, message and share documents, says that it now has more than 44 million daily users, up 12 million over a week, while Google says that while hundreds of millions of students are out of school, educators are using its tools like Google Classroom and Hangouts to conduct remote learning. Even Apple's app store started recommending software to help isolated people stay connected, including Houseparty, a group video-chat app; Flock, a team communication app; and Time Out, which reminds people to take breaks.

But there's something unique that humans get from interacting with one another that doesn't come across as well through technology. "Screens are distancing," says Thalia Wheatley, a professor of psychological and brain science at Dartmouth College, who studies the science of how people connect. "In face-to-face communication, you are sharing a moment in time and space with someone," she says. "That is incredibly compelling for our ancient brains."

Indeed, there's a reason companies like Best Buy, Yahoo and Aetna all experimented with remote work in years past before telling employees to come back into the office; remote communication is just not the same. Arguably, the reason that WeWork was able to raise so much money was that investors understood that remote workers prefer not to stay at home by themselves all day. WeWork needed to create a "better than home" experience, a place where people would want to be during work hours, as opposed to at home or in a coffee shop, the company said in 2019. "While working from home or 'third places' serves convenience, these experiences lacked that foundational human need for a sense of community," the company said.

Workers appear as holograms at a meeting using Spatial's collaboration software

Scientists are still puzzling out why in-person communication is superior, Wheatley says, but her lab has found some clues. The more eye contact people have during a conversation, she says, the more in sync they are with each other. The current state of video calls, in which you stare at a tiny dot that is the camera in your computer or phone to make it appear that you're looking someone in the eyes, cannot replicate that experience. Connecting with others has long been important to humans, she says—people trust one another more when they share a communal meal off the same plate instead of eating from individual plates, or when they pass around a bottle of wine rather than just drinking their own beverages. Prolonged isolation in the most extreme circumstances, as with prisoners in solitary confinement, is associated with a 29% risk of premature death, and studies have shown that extended isolation also leads to a decrease in the size of the hippocampus, which is the part of the brain related to learning, memory and spatial awareness. Some scientists estimate that loneliness shortens a person's life span by 15 years and is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. "I think it's not just that everybody loves social interaction and parties and whatnot," Wheatley says. "I think it's critically important to our mental and physical health."

In one study, people were asked to perform a stressful task: prepare a five-minute speech and complete a verbal arithmetic task to perform in front of an audience. Each participant received either in-person support or support over text message. People felt happier after completing the task if they had received in-person support. "It wasn't that texting was bad. It's just that it was consistently not as good as in-person support," says Susan Holtzman, a professor of psychology at the University of British Columbia and one of the study's authors. People benefit from visual cues like seeing a friend smile, which makes them smile too, she says. They also read audio cues; one study found that levels of a bonding hormone were higher among mothers and daughters who talked on the phone than among those who texted each other. Another study of young women found that they bonded most closely through in-person interaction, followed by video chat, audio chat and instant messaging, in that order. Research has also shown that being in the same room as a loved one can ease physical pain.

"The thing that has to get solved on the tech side," says Wheatley, "is the tech needs to kind of disappear so that you believe that you are in the room."

But there are still big differences between people working in the same room and people collaborating remotely. For one thing, it's much easier to multitask when you're working remotely—talking on the phone while responding to a Slack message while looking up recipes for dinner, for instance, and not giving anyone your full attention. That behavior is hard to hide in an on-site meeting, where your eyes are expected to focus on colleagues or whoever is speaking. "When we are face to face with someone, we typically have that person's undivided attention," Holtzman says. Some people also feel self-conscious when they can see an image of themselves on the screen—a common feature of most videoconferencing apps—

PREVIOUS SPREAD: QUALIO; THIS SPREAD: SPATIAL

which may erode the quality of interactions, she says.

People evolved to shake hands and gather together, even when doing so spreads disease, Wheatley says, so there must be something beneficial to it. They also, until recently, flew across the country to seal business deals and shake hands, even when technology existed to let them do that from home. (A 2017 study published in the *Harvard Business Review* found that asking for something in person was 34 times as successful as doing so via email.)

STILL, WITH EVERY CRISIS, the calls to increase remote work grow. It happened in 2001, when many were afraid to leave their homes after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, which the Washington *Post* predicted would "push telecommuting to another level." It happened in 2008, when spiking gas prices made people want to skip their commutes, and an analyst told the Los Angeles *Times* that Americans "were making lasting changes in their behavior" to avoid commuting at all. Even before the specter of the coronavirus, the *Wall Street Journal* predicted that the high cost of living in coastal cities like San Francisco and New York would prompt younger workers to move to small cities like Boise, Idaho, and work remotely.

Kris Hammes did that in the U.K. Hammes, now 35, was living an hour from London with his wife and small son and spending much of the day commuting. He missed seeing his son grow up. So the family moved to a city in the north of England, and Hammes, who works in the video-game industry, went freelance. He loves the flexibility of not having a commute and of spending more time with his son, but he has started to miss the in-person interactions he had with people in the office. He's finding himself becoming a hermit as his social circle shrinks. Even before the coronavirus scare made socializing nearly impossible, Hammes says he wasn't the kind of person to go to a pub and drink with friends. Sometimes, he'll find himself having a long conversation with the checkout clerk in the grocery store just to socialize with someone besides his wife and son.

"Even the most introverted people need to talk," he says. "You can still do that via Slack or Discord, but it's not the same. Typing LOL is not the same as actually laughing out loud."

For people who live alone, the reality of remote work can be far bleaker. David Mason, who lives in Arizona, works for a video-game company in Texas. When he gets lonely, he tries to go to the mall or take a walk outside, but he lives alone and sometimes feels as if he gets lost in his own world for days. He sometimes uses Apple's FaceTime app to video-chat with his daughter in Pennsylvania, but he finds that when he's working alone, there are few outlets for social interaction."There are times when I lose track of the days because I haven't talked to anyone and haven't been outside," he says.

Of course, in this time of pandemic, working from home is a luxury that many people can't access, and for workers, being lonely is more appealing than potentially getting sick. A 2016 Gallup survey showed that about 43% of workers were remote in some capacity, even if just for a few hours a month, up from 39% in 2012. Holtzman says with those kinds of numbers, it's important to make remote communication more feasible. She's interested in studying whether new forms of communication such as GIFs, emojis and memes, which help people express how they are feeling, can be a more effective way of communicating than email or phone calls.

Still, even people who are on video calls all day and feel connected start to miss the little interactions around the office, talking about the weather or joking about their need for coffee, Holtzman says. "We are just inherently social creatures," she says. "Those little interactions are going to enhance our feeling like we're connected and we belong to something bigger." It's something I noticed in my visit to Spatial; when I arrived at the San Francisco office, I made small talk in person with Agarawala, the CEO, joking about the commuters we could see stuck in traffic on the nearby freeway. I'd felt as if I knew him much better than Loewenstein, whom I met only via hologram.

Some managers are trying to make remote connections as good as, if not better than, in-person collaboration. Robert Fenton founded a company called Qualio in 2014, in his hometown of Dublin, and by 2016, he'd moved to San Francisco to access venture capital. He found that as he expanded the company, which builds compliance software for life-sciences companies, it was easiest to hire quickly if he didn't require that workers be in San Francisco or Ireland. He hired people in Colorado and in Florida, and started to figure out how to connect employees even if they were all remote.

Now Qualio has more than 30 employees spread around the world. People have video calls over Zoom every day and gossip on Slack channels about fitness and music and other hobbies. The company uses an app called Donut that encourages employees to have one-on-one meetings over a virtual doughnut or coffee to get to know one another. A few times a year, Qualio uses the money it would have spent on offices to fly every employee somewhere fun so they can work together for a week. They've met up in Dublin and Florida to socialize and work together.

People were worried at first about bonding with people they'd never met in person, he says, but it quickly became clear that they'd gotten to know each other extensively online. "Every team has weekly meetings, and we have daily huddles, and we've monthly sessions and we've quarterly cadences," he says. "So everybody touches everybody every day."

Fenton says his employees love being able to spend more time with their kids. They get to know one another by observing their apartments during video calls; Fenton has a cat often sleeping on the couch behind him, for instance, and he has a ukulele on his wall. People log in early to video meetings just to have idle chats, and they have great memories from the all-company in-person meetings, he says.

Fenton argues that the importance of meeting someone in person is overrated; humans can misread body language, and they can be daydreaming even in an in-person meeting.

Still, I found it hard to agree with Fenton as we talked over a Zoom video call; I wanted to look him in the eyes and show him that I was listening, but instead I had to stare at the small green dot on my computer. If I took my eyes off it, he might think me rude for looking away from him. I asked Fenton if any of his employees lived alone and felt depressed or lonely, and he said he wasn't sure. Before coronavirus closed his gym, Fenton would make sure to go to a 6:30 a.m. fitness class each day to get some in-person interaction. Now he's working out with friends over video calls. "It was a little unusual at first," he says, "but it's been a great outlet and a lot of fun."

Fenton says that interacting with people remotely is different from but not necessarily inferior to meeting them in person. "It's like learning a new language—not a complicated language, just different," he says of adjusting to remote communication. "And once you get to understand the difference, we've noticed that people just adjust very naturally."

That's the argument that Spatial is making too. Agarawala, the CEO, says that as 5G rolls out, augmented reality will become faster and less glitchy. Nreal, a tech company that is partnering with Spatial, will this year release its Light augmented-reality headset that looks more like a pair of sunglasses than the current clunkier AR headsets, and that should speed up adoption of remote work, Spatial says. Already, Spatial is working on features that will improve the collaborative experience; when people say a word, for instance, they can make it appear in the room, which can focus discussions. Spatial is also working on simulated blinking and lip-synching to make avatars look more real.

The company has seen an uptick in interest since the coronavirus started spreading, says Lee, the CPO, but even if the coronavirus goes away, remote work tools like Spatial will take over, because they're essential to combatting another crisis: climate change. If people work remotely, buildings will have smaller carbon footprints and people won't need to fly across the world to meet. Holographic meetings would help the world cut down on carbon, he says.

Whether they will lead to a spike in loneliness is another question. ◻

ILLUSTRATION BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME

REMOTE WORK BY THE NUMBERS

163 MILLION

Number of people in the U.S. who have been ordered or advised to stay home; **as of March 24, governors in 17 states had directed residents not to go out** unless they had jobs providing essential services that could not be performed remotely

67%

Percentage of employers who have taken steps to enable **workers who usually come into the office** to work from home, according to a survey by the law firm Seyfarth Shaw conducted March 12 to March 16

13%

Share of Hispanic or Latino workers who were able to work from home in 2017 and 2018, according to data from the American Time Use Survey; **by contrast, 18% of black workers,** 26% of white workers and 28% of Asian workers could work remotely

47%

Share of workers with a bachelor's degree who **work from home** at least occasionally, according to American Time Use Survey

28%

Percentage of single-person households in 2018 in the U.S., up from 16% in 1968; in Japan, **34.5% of households were single-person as of 2015**, and more than half of households in Denmark, Sweden and Lithuania were made up of people living alone in 2016

15 YEARS

Amount of time researchers say prolonged **social isolation** can potentially shave off a person's life span

HOSTAGES TO THE PANDEMIC

American prisoners in Venezuela face a growing threat

BY VERA BERGENGRUEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW GENITEMPO FOR TIME

Dennysse Vadell in her husband Tomeu's office at their home in Lake Charles, La., in October

WHEN SHE WALKED INTO THE LARGE CELL DEEP INSIDE VENEZUELA'S MOST NOTORIOUS PRISON IN JULY 2018, DENNYSSE VADELL COULD NOT FIND HER HUSBAND. SHE FRANTICALLY SCANNED THE FACES OF THE ASSEMBLED MEN IN DARK

green uniforms until finally one of them raised his arms and called her name: "Dennysse, I'm here." It had been less than nine months since masked security agents had stormed a conference room in Caracas and arrested Tomeu Vadell and five other Citgo executives, but he was unrecognizable. The usually robust, 6-ft. 1-in. Louisiana businessman had lost 60 lb., and his skin was tinged with gray after months without sun. "I couldn't believe it," Dennysse says. "When I hugged him, he was all bones."

Nearly two years later, the six men, five of them American citizens, face a danger graver even than their continuing imprisonment in Venezuelan strongman Nicolás Maduro's El Helicoide prison: COVID-19. Already there have been four cases of the new coronavirus reported in El Helicoide. The men have been trying to protect themselves in a crowded cell with no running water, armed only with undiluted bleach, which burns their hands and releases fumes that worsen their respiratory ailments. For the detained men—weakened by malnourishment and underlying health conditions—the virus would likely be a death sentence, their families say. "We are all absolutely desperate," said Carlos Añez, whose stepfather Jorge Toledo is one of the imprisoned Americans.

The coronavirus pandemic is only the latest of the powerful unseen forces that the Texas- and Louisiana-based executives have faced during their 28 months in prison. First among them is Maduro's need for pawns in his long-running political and economic battle with Washington and the Trump Administration, which has called for Maduro's ouster. Then there are the business interests of the men's employer, Citgo, the Houston-based U.S. subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil giant. And then there are the cold-eyed calculations of Maduro's opponents in Venezuela and abroad, for whom the safety and well-being of the six men are not the top priority.

The result, the families of the men say, has been a lack of urgency to get their husbands and fathers home. Despite well-intentioned efforts by some lawmakers and legal advocates to rally support, the case has remained largely out of public view. Citgo has failed to take concrete action to free its detained executives or to offer more than token support, according to the families. A meeting with Vice President Mike Pence last April amounted to little more than a "photo op," they say.

Now, with their court hearings postponed at least 18 times but no date set for their trial on charges of embezzlement, the families say that the COVID-19 pandemic might offer an unexpected opening. Already other countries including Iran have released U.S. detainees on humanitarian grounds. On March 19, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put out a statement calling for the release of the "wrongfully detained men," who "face a grave health risk if they become infected." The families have begged U.S. officials to use any leverage. "This is life or death," says Vadell's daughter Cristina. Now the families are left with the hope, and the fear, that the COVID-19 outbreak could bring the saga of the Citgo Six to an end, one way or another.

THE WEEKEND BEFORE THANKSGIVING in 2017, the six businessmen were summoned to attend an unusual last-minute meeting in Caracas. Nelson Martinez, the president of Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), which owns Citgo, was demanding to see the company's vice presidents to discuss budgets. All six men had been promoted to these executive positions in the preceding months, and the company insisted that they fly there together, chartering one of Citgo's company planes. Before he left, Vadell promised his wife he'd be home in Lake Charles, La., in time to roast and carve the turkey, his favorite tradition.

Just a day into what was supposed to be a three-day business trip, armed security agents stormed the conference room where they had gathered. Hours later, Venezuela's chief prosecutor, Tarek William Saab, announced that the six men had been arrested as part of a probe into "corruption of the worst kind." On state television, he held up a document he said proved that the executives had sought to profit from a deal to refinance $4 billion in Citgo bonds by signing off on terms that had not been approved and were unfavorable to Venezuela. The refinancing negotiations were approved by PDVSA's board in June 2017, according to documents reviewed by TIME, and most of the executives held roles that would not even have made them privy to such talks, their lawyers say. A deal was never signed.

The arrest of the Citgo Six occurred as Maduro, who was facing an election, sought to consolidate his control over the crown jewel of the Venezuelan economy overseas. By purging the American

WHO ARE THE CITGO SIX?

ALIRIO ZAMBRANO
VP of Corpus Christi Refinery

JORGE TOLEDO
VP of supply and marketing

JOSE PEREIRA
Chief executive

JOSE LUIS ZAMBRANO
VP of shared services

TOMEU VADELL
VP of refining

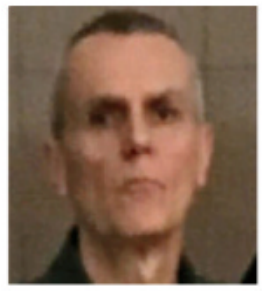
GUSTAVO CARDENAS
VP of public affairs

Clockwise from top left: Maria Elena Cardenas and her son Sergio, in October; Dennysse Vadell wears both her and her husband's wedding rings; the Vadell family, in October; a T-shirt for the "Free Citgo 6" campaign

company's leadership and arresting five U.S. citizens and one U.S. permanent resident, he was also hitting back at Washington for its punitive economic sanctions. The day after their arrest, Maduro declared that the arrested executives were "going to be judged for being corrupt, for being thieves, traitors to the fatherland," vowing they would be "properly imprisoned and should go to the worst jail that Venezuela has."

That threat quickly became a reality, according to those who have visited the men in detention in Caracas. The men were taken to a military prison run by the Venezuelan intelligence service, known as the Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar (DGCIM). Pompeo has denounced the DGCIM's leadership for "gross violations of human rights," and a recent U.N. report accuses it of being "responsible for arbitrary detentions, ill treatment and torture of political opponents and their relatives," including electric shocks, suffocation with plastic bags, waterboarding, beatings, stress positions and exposure to extreme temperatures.

The Citgo employees have mainly been held two floors below ground in an overcrowded basement cell, according to family members who have visited them. For much of their detention, the lights have been left on 24 hours a day. In a country plagued by food shortages, their diet often consisted of rice and pasta that family members estimated totaled only 600 calories a day. The facility seems to change the rules about visits and access to their belongings almost weekly.



TOMEU VADELL in 2019

Phone calls home are sporadic, often lasting between 30 seconds and two minutes before the line goes dead, according to the families. Sometimes that is just long enough for the men to list what items they urgently need. Everything from safe drinking water to food and medicine has to be paid for and provided by the families. They worry much of it is being confiscated by the guards. Even worse, over the course of their long detention many of the men began to develop health conditions, including bronchitis, heart issues and complications related to diabetes.

While Citgo publicly expressed its concerns after the arrests, family members say the company did little to provide clarity or support for the men's families at home. They had to find out about the arrests from friends and the news, not the company. In the following days they tried and failed to get Citgo's lawyers on the phone to find out what the company was doing to help their detained executives. Even though the businessmen are technically still employed by Citgo—in phone calls with their children, some of the men weakly joke that they're "still on a business trip"—the company stopped paying their salaries six months after they were arrested, the families say.

The situation has forced some of the families to burn through the men's retirement savings and even sell their homes in order to stay afloat while paying for everything the men need in Caracas. Maria Elena Cardenas, whose husband Gustavo is among

LEFT: COURTESY VADELL FAMILY; RIGHT: COURTESY TOLEDO FAMILY

From left: the Vadells in Lake Charles, La., Thanksgiving 2015; Cardenas shows family photographs of her husband in October; Toledo with his family in 2012

the imprisoned executives, is able to take only part-time work because she has to take care of her special-needs son Sergio. She has had to fall back on church donations in Houston for food and has had to apply for food stamps to pay medical bills.

Citgo says it is supporting U.S. efforts to secure the release of the men, who they refer to as "our colleagues," but did not provide details. "CITGO believes that the detention of these men violates their fundamental human rights, including the right to due process under law," the company said in a statement. "We continue to support the detainees' families, and we are grateful for the efforts of this Administration and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to bring these men home."

Throughout this ordeal, the families were advised to stay quiet. In meetings and calls with State Department officials, they were assured that the U.S. was doing everything it could to secure their release. But they could see little progress, and few specifics were shared with them. "We don't know with any level of detail whatsoever what the U.S. is doing," Añez said.

Current and former officials say that such delicate diplomacy is best undertaken behind the scenes. "Maduro takes Americans as a pawn in a chess game that he's playing in trying to survive as a dictator," says Fernando Cutz, who worked on the National Security Council under both the Obama and Trump administrations. "The U.S. can sanction him and his whole economy, and there's not a whole lot he can do

JORGE TOLEDO in 2018

back at us. It's a rare piece of leverage. It's very tough, but often the best strategy [in these cases] is to work behind the scenes."

State Department officials, including those in the the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, have worked "both directly and through intermediaries" to press the Maduro regime to release the men, a spokesperson for the State Department Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs tells TIME.

Representative Pete Olson, a Texas Republican who counts three of the detained men as constituents, similarly says that "most of the diplomacy to secure their release is not happening in front of the media for security reasons," although he acknowledged "it seems for every two steps forward we take toward their release, we then take one step back."

But over time, the families have grown increasingly frustrated. They say they don't understand why Trump and other officials, in their frequent denunciations of Maduro as a dictator and expressions of support for the suffering of the Venezuelan people, have rarely mentioned the five U.S. citizens imprisoned there. While the Trump Administration touted its record of returning American hostages, including from Venezuela, their detained family members seemed to have been forgotten. Constant

turnover in the State Department and National Security Council meant that the U.S. officials familiar with their case kept leaving their positions, forcing the families to explain their case to a new official all over again.

All the while, their loved ones were deteriorating. The drastic physical change is evident in photos from inside the prison obtained by TIME, showing the men gaunt with shaved heads. "The shock of seeing him like that, in deplorable conditions, was indescribable—an innocent person, an honest person who has never stolen as much as a pencil from his office," said Cardenas, who managed to arrange a trip from Houston to Caracas in summer 2018 to visit her husband Gustavo with her children.

IN JANUARY 2019, the political situation in Venezuela finally seemed to shift. Charging that Maduro's re-election the previous year had been illegitimate, opposition leader Juan Guaidó declared himself the country's rightful interim President, and he was backed by the U.S. and dozens of other governments.

But Guaidó turned out to be no help for the detained Americans. The opposition is treating the men with indifference, at best. Guaidó officials tell TIME it was just "one of so many cases that show the lawlessness of the regime." Says Gustavo Marcano, the minister counselor to the Venezuelan opposition's envoy to Washington: "No doubt some of them are people who are victims, but this is not a separate case, it's part of the drama that millions of Venezuelans are living."

Nor has Guaidó's success at winning control of Citgo—depriving Maduro of that prize, with the help of a U.S. court—changed the company's posture toward the families. It spent around $2 million a year in both 2018 and 2019 on Washington lobbyists to represent company interests, according to filings. The families say the company has made no visible efforts to push for the detained Americans' release.

In March 2019, the White House reached out to the families of the Citgo executives. Pence hosted the families at the White House, reading out the names of the six men as if in a solemn prayer. "The names of all of them deserve to be known to the world," Pence said. The Vice President finally uttered the words the families had waited 18 months to hear from a high-profile U.S. leader, promising that the Administration would "use all means at our disposal" to secure their release. "We are with you, we are going to stand with you until your loved ones are free, until Venezuela is free," Pence told them. He said Trump was looking at a "broad range of options."

A year later, little seems to have come from that meeting. The families compare the nice talk from the Administration with the results the President got in other cases, especially that of Joshua Holt, a Utah man who was held for more than two years in a Caracas jail for allegedly stockpiling guns and was personally welcomed home by Trump last year. "The President and his team were very engaged and succeeded in bringing him home," said Jason Poblete, a Washington, D.C., lawyer who represents the Vadells.

The families of the Citgo executives say they feel painfully aware that the same efforts aren't being made on their behalf. They worry it's due to a bias because they're Venezuelan American, making them second-class citizens when it comes to urgency for the U.S. government, and the perception that the men must have been complicit in something illegal. "As American citizens, you never think something like this could happen to you," says Vadell's daughter Veronica. "You think it would be like in the movies, where the U.S. would send a rescue team or do everything possible to get you out. But soon you realize it's all just being managed by human beings, and that no one is going to help you, nothing is going to happen if the political will isn't there."

'AS AMERICAN CITIZENS, YOU NEVER THINK SOMETHING LIKE THIS COULD HAPPEN TO YOU.'

—**VERONICA VADELL,** DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THE CITGO SIX

Last summer, the families watched in disbelief as Trump repeatedly tweeted about the detention of American rapper A$AP Rocky after he was accused of assault following a fight in Stockholm. When the President then dispatched his special envoy for hostage affairs, Robert O'Brien, to Sweden to oversee his release, it felt surreal. For them, it has been "a fight of 16 months from when they took my father hostage to get their office to talk to us," Cristina Vadell tells TIME. "This rapper was in Swedish jail, in a country that unlike Venezuela has an actual legal process, and the U.S. sends O'Brien there to negotiate for his release in person," she says. "Meanwhile the government is leaving our father, who is an innocent 60-year-old man, out to dry."

IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR, soon after the men had marked a third Thanksgiving in prison, there seemed to be a breakthrough when they were suddenly released on house arrest in Caracas. Despite the armed guards outside the doors, who came in every four hours to take photos of them, their families hoped it was a step in the right direction. In FaceTime video calls, they saw the men were regaining some weight and their hair was growing back.

But in late January, rumors began to circulate in Spanish-language media that a high-profile meeting between Trump and Guaidó was in the works.

Veronica Vadell and her husband Hayes Weggeman at the Vadell home in Lake Charles, La., in October

Alarmed, legal advocates for the Citgo Six quietly and repeatedly warned the Trump Administration that if such a visit wasn't handled properly, the Maduro regime would seek political retribution. But Trump proceeded. He invited Guaidó as his guest to the Feb. 4 State of the Union address, where he touted him as the "true and legitimate President of Venezuela."

The following day, just hours after Trump received Guaidó at the White House, the six American executives back in Caracas were seized and again imprisoned. Jorge Toledo was eating dinner with a friend when security agents came in and told him they were taking him to a medical examination. His friend later told his family that, "He turned pale, like we was going to pass out," recalls Añez. When Toledo tried to pack some belongings, he was told he would be coming right back. That evening, he and the other Citgo executives were taken to El Helicoide, a prison inside a massive pyramid-shaped building that was originally built to be a shopping center. It would be 42 days before their families would hear from them again. When they finally received the phone call, the global coronavirus pandemic was already looming over Venezuela.

Now, family members and legal advocates say the COVID-19 outbreak could help spur some action as the U.S. has launched a broader push to bring home Americans detained abroad on humanitarian grounds amid fears that the virus could lead to their deaths. "People are starting to relate to our case in a way they never would have," Veronica Vadell says.

The families hardly dare say it, but quietly they hope that there may be a silver lining to the scourge that is sweeping the world. Venezuela is bracing for the terrifying effects of the disease. Maduro announced a nationwide lockdown on March 16, and epidemiologists have warned the country will be especially vulnerable to the outbreak because of its crippled health system that is already short on hospital beds and basic medical supplies.

Perhaps, the families say, the outbreak will spur a moment of humanitarianism in the leadership of the country. If it doesn't, they fear, the disease could just as likely be the regime's indirect death sentence for six innocent victims of a global power struggle.

SPECIAL REPORT

APA NOT AL

We rarely give our mirror neurons much thought. Many of us don't even know that we have mirror neurons. But our brains are full of them—and that's a very good thing.

As their name suggests, it is mirror neurons that allow us to fathom one another, to learn from one another, to live inside one another's heads. If I see you laugh, I'm inclined to laugh. If you smile, I smile. If you cry—especially if I know you, and certainly if I love you—I cry too. We cry even when actors cry—pantomimed tears; even pretend suffering touches us.

If evolution designed our brains for empathy, for caring, for the love of community and the binding of the

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tribe, we've been letting those gifts go to waste. The world is defined by its fractions more than by its whole: empowered communities and marginalized communities, oppressors and the oppressed, wealthy and poor, native-born populations barring the door to immigrants seeking safety and succor.

That's not how we were made—not person to person, at least. But tribe on tribe, nation on nation, political party on political party, we do battle all the time.

We can still change that. If our nations, our leaders, can't behave, individuals and communities can. All around us, if you look even a little, are examples of people practicing a sort of freelance decency: feeding, healing, educating others, sometimes one-on-one, sometimes on a scale that's national or even global.

It is instructive that we are now beset by a disease that recognizes none of the ways we divide ourselves. We're humbled by the virus, united in a collective crouch. United we will rise against it too. In similar union—if we choose—we can rise against the biases and injustice that have too long divided us. —*Jeffrey Kluger*

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ILLUSTRATION BY ROB DOBI FOR TIME

WE'VE ALWAYS NEEDED ONE ANOTHER

Finding community in the midst of a pandemic

By Connie Schultz

ILLUSTRATION BY SHOUT FOR TIME

ONCE UPON A TIME, ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO, MORE THAN 50 MEMBERS of our Cleveland neighborhood left the warmth of our homes on a snowy weeknight to gather for a conversation about race.

We live in the largest development built in the city of Cleveland since World War II, with 222 homes. We call it an "intentional" community in this deeply divided city. It is economically and racially diverse, and includes a number of LGBTQ families. We are white, black and Latino. We are working parents, empty nesters and retirees.

We live in modest, well-tended homes. Our yards are small, and we have lots of front porches and stoops. This is by design. We are meant to be neighbors, not side-by-side strangers. An evening walk on summer nights easily involves a dozen hellos and a few spontaneous conversations.

On this night in February, though, we had gathered to discuss what many of us wanted to believe could never happen here, even as some had always assumed it would. One exchange had led to another, and then another after that, and it was becoming clear that even in our beloved community of good intentions, racial tensions were bubbling up. Many white residents had been unaware, which was part of the problem. My friend the Rev. Kate Matthews, who is white and served on the board of our homeowners' association, decided to do something about it.

Kate had recently read psychologist Deborah L. Plummer's book *Some of My Friends Are …* about "the daunting challenges and untapped benefit of cross-racial friendships." As Kate explained it to me, it had increasingly bothered her that despite the number of African Americans in her orbit, none of them were her close friends.

Through her work on the board, Kate had grown close to several black residents. Her conversations with them led her to reach out to Plummer, who had recently moved back to Cleveland. Would she be willing to lead us in a conversation on what it means to be a healthy, diverse community?

Plummer agreed. Kate and a team of volunteers peppered the neighborhood with flyers. Nearly 60—half of us black, half white—showed up.

For two hours, we explored the difference between "fellowship friends"—those people we know in social or professional settings—and "friends of the heart," who are the ones who know our secrets and love us anyway. We talked about racism, a lot. We asked questions of one another and listened to the answers. Some of us winced. Others nodded in the universal language of "It's about time."

At the end of the discussion, as the snow continued to fall, we wrote notes to ourselves about what we planned to do to build relationships in our community. We sealed them in self-addressed envelopes, and Plummer promised to mail them to us in a few months. Seeing your own handwriting on an envelope addressed to you has a way of jolting one into accountability, I suspect.

We took our time leaving the meeting that night, lingering in our collective sigh of relief. We had more work to do, and we knew it. But we had a plan.

"We can start by being kinder," a woman behind me said as we walked out the door. "Who doesn't need kindness?"

Like most Americans, we had no idea what was coming.

We are yearning for the connection, even if six feet away

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS the coronavirus has sidelined everything but the will to live. We are engaged in "social distancing," which is meant to protect us but sounds like the language of suburban developments with big lawns and guard booths at the gate. Grocery shopping has become the 2020 version of food rationing. We never know what will be available from one day to the next. Some are hoarding, and those empty

shelves challenge our faith in our fellow humans.

Early in March, our church abandoned the handshake during the passing of peace at Sunday worship. Some opted for elbow bumps, but I liked placing my hand over my heart and making eye contact, maybe leaning in a little. A moot point now, as our church, like so many other houses of worship, has suspended all gatherings. This is meant to keep us safe, of course. The mischief in me would like to discuss what it says about our faith in God, and in one another, to believe we're better off apart. But then I think about how I always tell my husband, "Don't die stupid," after I find out he was talking on his cell phone while crossing a busy street. There's only so much we can ask of God.

As always in this country, some are suffering more than others. The elderly and the sick are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, but so are those who were at an economic and social disadvantage before this crisis started. When we pull out of our community, we don't have to drive even a half mile in any direction to see the continued blight of urban neighborhoods that never recovered from the soaring rate of foreclosures in 2007. Every part of life is harsher when you live in poverty, including the judgment of those who see you as an embarrassing footnote in the fabled tale of downtown development and renewal.

Racial and economic inequality, voter suppression and foreign interference with our elections—it was all so overwhelming before the threat of this virus became all-consuming. The racial tensions we were hoping to address in our community are magnified tenfold by a President who daily insists on giving COVID-19 a racist name, which I wish my colleagues would stop repeating because it is potentially endangering the lives of Asian Americans. Trump has repeatedly made clear that he doesn't care.

IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, though, something is happening. We have shifted the topic but not the intention. Neighbors are checking in with one another more than we used to. We're sharing more phone numbers and coordinating tag-team trips to the grocery and pharmacy. Far more of us, it seems, are taking walks throughout the day. We are yearning for the connection, even if six feet away.

One neighbor, recently widowed, is circulating flyers offering to run errands and asking for donations for a nearby neighborhood in need. Her list included diapers and feminine-hygiene products, and so I've just walked around the house gathering up the supplies we keep here for the daughters in our family, and our youngest grandchildren. They won't be visiting soon, their parents insist, because they want to protect us. All those years of promising my children they would never have to worry about strong, mighty me, and here we are.

It is my habit to turn to poetry in times of stress. Today I picked up my copy of Mark Nepo's *Surviving Has Made Me Crazy.* His poem "In the Other Kind of Time" reminds me of what our community, what every community, should be trying to do in this moment, in this time.

Come with me out of the cold
where we can put down the
notions we've been carrying
like torn flags into battle

We can throw them to the earth
or place them in the earth, and ask,
why these patterns in the first place?
If you want, we can repair them, if
they still seem true. Or we can
sing as they burn.

This is our truth: we've always needed one another. This is our bigger truth: we're starting to act like it.

That conversation about race in our community would be put on hold only with our consent, and it appears we've collectively made a decision: permission denied. We are setting fire to that reckless disregard for our potential.

The porches and front stoops are living up to their promise. We wave hello and talk across our tiny yards. The questions rise like songs: "How are you holding up?" "What do you need?" "How can I help?" The chorus is always the same: I see you.

Schultz, a Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist, is the author of the upcoming novel The Daughters of Erietown

OUR EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS

Even before social distancing, Americans were feeling disconnected from one another By Vivek Murthy

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK SMITH FOR TIME

ON DEC. 15, 2014, I BEGAN MY TENURE AS THE 19TH SURGEON GENERAL of the U.S. I expected that my focus as the "nation's doctor" would encompass issues like obesity, tobacco-related disease, mental health and vaccine-preventable illness. But as I embarked on a listening tour of the U.S., one topic kept coming up. It wasn't a frontline complaint. It wasn't even identified directly as a health ailment. It was loneliness, and it ran like a dark thread through many of the more obvious issues people brought to my attention, like addiction, violence, anxiety and depression. It wasn't always easy to tease out cause and effect—in some cases, loneliness was driving health problems; in others, it was a consequence of the illness and hardships that people were experiencing—but clearly there was something about our disconnection from one another that was making people's lives worse than they had to be.

At a time when we're being instructed not to leave home or visit loved ones, loneliness may seem like a given, but even before most people knew what "social distancing" was, the pervasiveness of this feeling was apparent. While the experience of loneliness is as old as humanity, recent years, marked by a politicized climate of distrust and division, have felt like an inflection point. Communities are dealing with pressing problems—like climate change, terrorism, poverty, and racial and economic inequities—that require dialogue and cooperation. But even as we live with increasing diversity, it's easier than ever to restrict our contact, both online and off, to people who resemble us in appearance, views and interests, and dismiss those who don't share our beliefs or affiliations. The result is a spiral of disconnection that's contributing to the unraveling of civil society today.

Part of the issue is that we don't necessarily encounter those who are different from us in our daily lives: according to the Pew Research Center, 68% of suburbanites are white, compared with just 44% of city dwellers. That sets up a racial disconnect between suburban and urban populations. Even in urban centers, people often live in neighborhoods that are segregated by race or socioeconomic status. Meanwhile, millions of Americans in cities, suburbia and rural areas alike are struggling with poverty and without good-paying jobs. This has steeped fear and resentment not only among those who feel they've lost status they're entitled to, but also among those who feel they've been too long excluded from their fair share. In 2018, one major poll found that 79% of U.S. adults are concerned that the "negative tone and lack of civility in Washington will lead to violence or acts of terror." The poll found that sentiment was shared by strong majorities across the political spectrum, ages, income levels, education and regions.

For John Paul Lederach, an international peace builder and expert in conflict transformation, the first step is to promote a mutual sense of belonging. That means meeting and serving people where they live, by physically going to their homes or neighborhoods. "A lot of our isolation," he said, "is the degree to which people feel invisible. So, when you come and show up and have concern and conversation from their location, you're rehumanizing the situation that has lost that connection at a very deep level." Given trends like migration and virtual work and commerce, which make community harder to build and prioritize, we need physical common ground even more than ever.

Despite the polarized time in which we live, our community instincts remain alive and well

But what about feuding groups that refuse to share space, whose distrust for each other has ignited into fear and anger? Historically this was how wars were fomented, since it was easy to demonize an enemy one was never going to encounter personally except on the battlefield. This formula for conflict has ramped up with the advent of 24/7 broadcasting and social media. Technology creates the illusion that we do know our enemies. We see them, we hear them in our own homes every day, at any hour we choose to look, even if the versions that we

"know" are often deceptive and unidimensional. As a result, the people we learn to fear seem closer and scarier than they used to, and a sense of imminent threat makes our world feel less safe and hospitable. It erodes our sense that we all belong here.

This anxiety may not initially feel like the loneliness we associate with isolation. It can feel like passionate—if negative—engagement. But the natural response to protect ourselves in the face of threat is to close down and prejudge others. Much of this, according to a 2014 series of studies published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* is fueled by a cognitive bias known as "motive attribution asymmetry." It's the assumption that our beliefs are grounded in love, while our opponents' are based on hatred.

SOCIOLOGIST AND AUTHOR Parker J. Palmer, who founded the Center for Courage and Renewal to facilitate fellowship across divisions and differences, recalls Alexis de Tocqueville's observations in *Democracy in America:* "He said that American democracy could not thrive without the prepolitical layer of voluntary associations in which people gather in various forms of community: family, friendship groups, classrooms, workplaces, religious communities and civic spaces." What happens in these gatherings, Palmer explains, is that people "remind themselves of their connectedness with one another and create a million microdemocracies upon which the macrodemocracy depends."

By "macrodemocracy," he meant more than just voting. He meant civic engagement and participation. If I'm connected to the children in my neighborhood, I may be motivated to go to a school-board meeting, even if I don't have kids. If I have friends who can't drive, I'm more likely to engage in a campaign for better public transportation. Being connected to others gives us a stake in more than our own interests and increases our motivation to work together.

Our politicians used to understand this. Until fairly recently, members of all parties in Congress would meet at school functions because their kids went to the same schools. They played softball or met at the gym. They attended the same parties. Now Representatives travel back to their districts on weekends, their families often stay in their home state, and socializing across ideological lines is viewed as betrayal. As a result, Palmer's "prepolitical layers of association" have frayed and increasingly are being replaced by "postpolitical" connections that require agreement before connection. This makes it ever more difficult for politicians to work with one another. Meanwhile, the entire country is stuck in gridlock.

Yet of all the issues I worked on as surgeon general, loneliness elicited more interest than almost any other topic from both very conservative and very liberal members of Congress, from young and old people, and from urban and rural residents alike. After my presentations to mayors, medical societies and business leaders from around the world, it was what everyone seemed to want to talk about. I think this is because so many people have known loneliness themselves or have seen it in the people around them. It's a universal condition that affects all of us directly or through the people we love.

The irony is that the antidote to loneliness, human connection, is also a universal condition. In fact, we are hardwired for connection—as we demonstrate every time we come together around a common purpose or crisis. Such was the collective action of the students in Parkland, Fla., after the 2018 mass shooting at their school claimed 17 lives. We also see this instinct in the outpouring of aid and assistance by volunteers that follows major hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes around the globe. And even now, as we face the global COVID-19 pandemic and resort to physical distancing to reduce the spread of the virus, we are recognizing that we cannot make it through the fear, danger and uncertainty of the current moment without supporting one another. Despite the polarized time in which we live, our community instincts remain alive and well. When we share a common purpose, when we feel a common urgency, when we hear a call for help that we are able to answer, most of us will step up and come together.

Murthy, a former surgeon general of the U.S., is the author of the upcoming book Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World, *from which this piece was adapted*

A NEW CIVILITY

If we change our words, can we build a better world?

By Kaitlyn Greenidge

A FEW YEARS AGO, I WAS RESEARCHING A BLACK women's social club and mutual-aid society called the United Order of Tents, a group that began during slavery to help enslaved women escape to freedom. It was still operating in the 21st century, providing black communities with resources for senior citizens, banking and loans. But besides the economic benefits of this institution, I was struck by how much of what they were able to complete together was based on fostering a sense of community. The women I spoke to pointed as much to their gatherings, celebrations and parties as they did to their community work—for many, these were one and the same.

Those women are the best examples I can think of of civility, at least the kind of civility I want to see. We have had so many requests for civility since the 2016 presidential election that I am not even sure what people mean when they use the word anymore. I think that is kind of the point—*civility* gestures toward the values of thoughtfulness, of care. But civility, which is so often interpreted as privileging comfort and societal norms over truth, is often enacted as violence—killing those ideas and arguments that make those in power uncomfortable. Think of Martin Luther King's famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in which he wrote, "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens' Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice."

It's about listening to the needs and desires of the people

CAN WE TAKE the lessons of the Tents to a deeper meaning of civility? I think of the other meaning of the word *civil:* "relating to ordinary citizens and their concerns." To that end, I thought a way to come to a radical understanding of civility could be to ask organizers who think and work constantly to reach ordinary people how they use language to achieve this civic goal. Maybe we could come up with a version of civility concerned less with whether or not someone used strong language, and more with whether the words they used described a future that could work for all.

One of the organizers I approached was Ai-jen Poo, the director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Poo stresses, "When building support and community, an offering is more attractive than a request …" She says, "When I invite you to a gathering, I invite you to become connected to something bigger than yourself. One of the most effective approaches that we use is by beginning our meetings with sharing personal care stories. Everyone can relate to the need of care: we have all needed care at some point in our lives, or know someone who is receiving or in need of care."

Another organizer I spoke with was Emery Wright, the co-director of the group Project South. Wright says, "Effective organizing is not about prescribing solutions and convincing people to agree with you. It's about listening to the needs and desires of the people and coming to shared agreement about collective action based on those needs and desires."

Every organizer I contacted said the obsession with correct language hinders movements and can stop connections between people. Yamani Hernandez, the executive director of the National Network of Abortion Funds, says, "I think political education is important. However I think it's really important for our language to be accessible and plain. I would say, Don't lose the people you're fighting for just because they didn't know or use the same words you did to describe their experience or analysis of an issue."

What would it mean if we used these guidelines to identify civil speech? If we said that *civil* included the language that called in more people, that provided space to listen to their concerns. If we decided common ground was meant for building new worlds, not paving over uncomfortable truths? I'm not sure, but I hope we will soon find out.

Greenidge is the author of the novel We Love You, Charlie Freeman

ILLUSTRATION BY GRACIA LAM FOR TIME

THE FELLOWSHIP OF LIBERTIES

In defending our shared rights, Americans can find common ground By David French

ON JAN. 8, 2014, A HOMELESS MAN NAMED ALEXANDER BAXTER MADE a bad decision. A suspect in a burglary, he ran from the police and then compounded his error by entering a home that was not his. He made a mistake, but he did not deserve what came next. After police threatened to release their dog if he didn't surrender, Baxter did not answer at first. Then, after the dog found him, he sat down and put his hands in the air, yet the police unleashed the dog again. The dog attacked and inflicted injuries that required emergency medical treatment.

Baxter sued the police and lost. A court of appeals ruled that the arresting officers enjoyed immunity for their actions. The officers violated Baxter's civil liberties, but he had no recourse against the men who harmed him. On behalf of Baxter, in October, the ACLU filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court, asking it to reverse the decision.

JOE RAEDLE—GETTY IMAGES

Why bring up the plight of Alexander Baxter? Because it goes to the heart of whether all Americans can enjoy the benefits of our nation's most basic social compact: the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. As our nation fractures upon religious, political and cultural lines, there still remains a distinctly American ideal, articulated in the Declaration of Independence and operationalized in the Bill of Rights.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," says the Declaration, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." This is an aspirational statement. It has no legal force. The Bill of Rights, however, does have the force of law, and the rights it articulates—including freedom of speech, free exercise of religion, and rights to due process—spell out (to quote the 14th Amendment) the "privileges or immunities" of American citizenship.

I'm politically conservative, but I'm also a civil libertarian. In plain terms, that means I've dedicated a large segment of my career to defending the civil liberties of people who strongly disagree with my politics. And in that career—which has included defending people of different faiths, different cultures, different sexual orientations and different ethnicities—I've discovered that a shared defense of civil liberties ties us together in both fellowship and interdependence.

The fellowship can be easy to see. Defending the rights of others creates a tangible bond of friendship and understanding. Conversely, it is difficult for liberty to survive enmity. America's darkest days have tied together dehumanization and oppression. It has denied liberty to those men and women it despised. But the defense of liberty itself creates a lasting communal bond.

The interdependence, however, is often obvious mainly to lawyers. We see how the victories of conservatives and progressives alike protect the social compact for all.

Take, for example, a recent Arizona case in which a federal judge reversed criminal convictions against four progressive religious activists for providing humanitarian supplies to migrants in a federal wilderness. The court held that the activists were protected by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and one of the cases it cited was *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby,* the controversial 2014 decision that protected the religious-freedom rights of a conservative company to refuse to comply with Obamacare mandates to cover certain kinds of contraceptives for its employees. The victory of conservative believers helped keep progressive believers out of prison.

OUR LEGAL SYSTEM has made great strides in extending the blessings of liberty far beyond the most privileged populations in America's founding. Our Constitution was once a dead letter for African Americans, meaningless to Native Americans and observed mainly in the breach for many other marginalized groups. Slowly, painfully, this has changed. But there is work yet to do.

Our nation is still too protective of public servants who violate the fundamental freedoms of American citizens. It is still too focused on outcomes—who wins—rather than on the health of our Bill of Rights.

At its best, the American social compact vindicates the rights not just of those on the left and the right, but also of those who are marginalized and powerless. This brings us back to Alexander Baxter, a homeless man surrendering to the agents of the state, sitting with his arms in the air. The American social compact reaches us, yes, but it also reaches him, and if the Supreme Court can vindicate his rights, it will take yet another important step toward the fellowship and interdependence that can help heal a polarized nation.

French is a TIME columnist

HOW TO MAKE CHANGE

Despite America's sharp divisions, it's still possible to make bipartisan progress By Van Jones

IT IS ALMOST A TRUISM THAT AMERICA IS MORE DIVIDED THAN EVER. In fact, it feels like our lack of consensus is the only thing there is a consensus about.

But go ask someone who just got an early release from federal prison about this idea of division. Go ask a coal miner, whose health care and pension the government recently saved. Talk to families facing America's addiction crisis, as policies begin to shift to honor their struggle. Quietly, below the radar, a new kind of bipartisanship is emerging. It tells a different story about who we are as a country—and who we could become.

Bipartisanship today is different from the top-down bipartisanship of the 1990s and early 2000s, which gave the term a bad odor. That old approach—led by elite political professionals who ideologically were in the mushy middle—gave us NAFTA, prisons everywhere and endless wars.

As a result, people of strong political conviction on both the right and the left came to distrust anyone who talked about "compromise" and "reaching across the aisle." And the grassroots—from Black Lives Matter to the Tea Party, from Bernie Sandernistas to the MAGA-hat crowd—revolted against the traditional dealmakers in both parties. The resulting partisan division has convinced the public that the parties can never cooperate on anything.

But that's not true. Today's bipartisanship is actually supported by strong partisans, not by weak moderates. And it is driven from below: not by timid insiders but by desperate outsiders whose communities have been let down and left out for generations.

I discovered this bottom-up bipartisanship while working to fix our criminal-justice system. In 2014, I helped launch #cut50—a bipartisan campaign to cut crime and incarceration in half. My progressive cofounders, Jessica Jackson and Matt Haney, and I had found strong conservative allies, including Newt Gingrich and Koch Industries' Mark Holden. Through our work, which took me from South Central L.A. to the red parts of Pennsylvania to West Virginia and back again, I learned key lessons, working with "the other side."

First, the most important formula for bipartisan breakthroughs: pay less attention to the politics at the top and more attention to the pain at the bottom. Pick tough issues that neither party has been able to solve. Only the best people in either party will touch those causes. So you will start out with great partners.

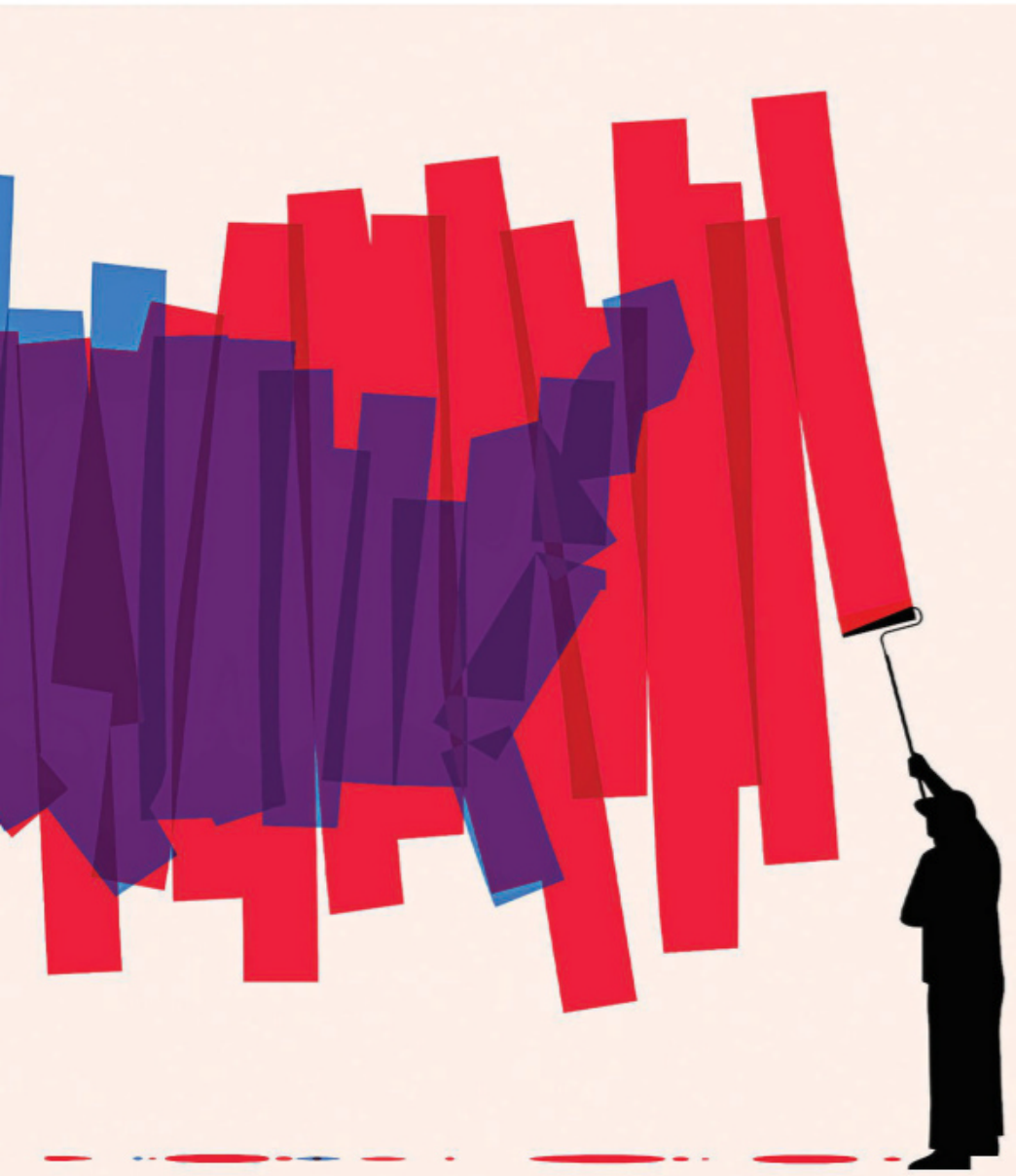
Second, separate battleground issues from common-ground issues. Some issues are still hot and divisive. State your differences on those issues—and then move on to areas where you can get something done. For example, I work with the libertarians at Koch Industries on criminal-justice reform while fighting them passionately on environmental policy. At the end of a conference call, I sometimes tease my right-wing allies: "O.K., now I gotta go beat you on all the other issues!" You can fiercely oppose someone on a battleground issue and still work with them on a common-ground issue.

Third, don't convert. Cooperate! Don't try to make other people adopt your worldview just to work on a problem together. I've found, for instance, that progressives working to fix the prison system are often motivated by empathy and a desire for racial justice. On the other hand, conservatives often want fiscal restraint, less government overreach and second-chance redemption for fallen sinners. We have different reasons, but we want the same result. Let that be good enough.

Fourth, start human, stay human. Respect that whoever you are working with on the other side has noble ideals and values. Don't make them bear the cross for the misdeeds of the worst elements in their own party. They can't control their yahoos any more than you can control yours. And when disagreements arise, don't call people out, based on your set of principles. If anything, try to call them up to a higher commitment—inviting them to better honor their own principles.

OF COURSE, AFTER Trump's win, I felt squeezed by a moral dilemma. As a progressive, I will always fight policies I see as anti-immigrant, anti- environment, etc. But a deeper question vexed me: Was resistance enough? Would simply opposing Trump solve the underlying social problems that predated and helped fuel his rise? And how should I relate to

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN WISEMAN FOR TIME



Trump's voters? Condemn them or work to better understand them? After all, I had long cared about people trapped in urban and rural poverty. Should I stop trying to alleviate suffering in both red counties and blue cities to focus instead on discrediting 45?

Ultimately, I decided to stick to the principles I'd learned in the pre-Trump era and keep working across ideological lines. I'm glad I did. In recent years, left-right alliances have passed justice-reform bills in several states. In December 2018, President Trump signed the First Step Act, a bipartisan measure making rehabilitation (rather than mere punishment) the federal prison system's goal. The bill has already accelerated freedom for more than 5,000 people. Trump deserves more credit for rallying the GOP to break D.C.'s long-standing logjam on this issue. That win expanded hope and made prison reform safer ground for both parties.

But criminal-justice reform isn't the only issue where working together can lead to results. Just last year we saw another example of a bottom-up movement that secured a bipartisan win when sick, retired coal miners led a grassroots movement that persuaded congressional leaders in both parties to save their pensions and health care.

There are at least three other areas where Americans could make similar progress.

Start with addiction. When the face of addiction was black, our government saw addiction as a crime, not a disease. Thirty years ago, America shamefully filled its prisons with young men of color. Today, as the body count has risen in whiter parts of the industrial heartland and Appalachia, the public rhetoric has been more sympathetic. But progress has been too slow. There remains great wisdom in urban America about how to respond compassionately and effectively to people trapped by drugs. Sadly, rural white leaders have not yet had the good sense (or national contacts) to reach out to black America for help. And black, brown and urban leaders have not yet had the heart (or bandwidth) to offer it. But a rural-urban alliance to fully decriminalize addiction would have great appeal and power.

Then there's mental health. There is a homicide crisis in urban America, and too many African Americans and Latinos have attended too many funerals and buried too many sons and daughters. Meanwhile, there is a suicide crisis in suburban and rural America, with rates skyrocketing, especially among young women and older whites. And too many of our veterans, abandoned after a generation of war, face PTSD and other diagnoses without the support they need. These vets are as likely to come from inner-city Detroit as rural Georgia. This trauma needs treatment on a mass scale, and a stronger blue-red alliance is waiting to be formed.

Finally, there's intergenerational poverty—from Appalachia to the 'hood. The truth is that there is no such thing as a liberals-only or conservatives-only solution to entrenched poverty. Low-wealth communities need government intervention through some combination of social programs, tax credits and Opportunity Zones. But to benefit from these measures and succeed, an individual also needs the traditionally conservative personal values of hard work and thrift. Real solutions require both social and personal responsibility.

Don't call people out when disagreements arise. Try calling them up to a higher commitment

In other words, we need each other. To uplift those whom Jesus called "the least of these," we don't have to convert or annihilate each other. Liberals can stay liberal; conservatives can stay conservative.

Liberals fight for social justice, while small-government conservatives fight for liberty. Both traditions are necessary for America to have liberty and justice for all.

To end the food fight at the top of our political parties, we need strong partisans at the bottom working together. Bottom-up bipartisanship can solve the problems that top-down bipartisanship created. Common pain at the grassroots level can lead to common purpose, common ground and commonsense solutions. Even now.

Jones is the CEO of the REFORM Alliance and author of Beyond the Messy Truth: How We Came Apart, How We Come Together

Marines in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina

COLLECTIVE WILL

What the response to Katrina taught one veteran about how we help each other By Elliot Ackerman

A NATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANdemic is under way. Congress is doing its part with a disaster-relief and economic-stimulus package. Our federal response, however essential it may be, is less critical than how we respond community by community to this disaster. We are facing a great test of American collectivism.

As a Marine, I participated in the federal response to Hurricane Katrina and witnessed firsthand the importance of strong communities, the limits of a federal response and the consequences when a community falters. Three days after the hurricane, I arrived in New Orleans leading a platoon of 70 Marines. Our platoon was sent to a suburb to augment recovery efforts.

The mayor said the most essential service we could provide would be to help first responders take care of their own homes and families. Each day, the people on his list would come to the warehouse where we were staying and take a few Marines with them to help. What soon became obvious was the people on this list were not those most in need. Marines on the work sites were sledgehammering out drywall, tidying up front yards and, in one case, cleaning someone's swimming pool. The list the mayor handed us did contain some first responders, but his definition of *first responder* also included many of his political friends and allies.

After a week, we tore up that list. We relied on others in the community to guide us to where our help was required. In one instance, a gas-station attendant directed us to an elderly couple. A tree had fallen through the roof of their home. With nowhere else to go, they were still living in the house, even among the continuing rains. To remove the tree, we'd need chain saws to cut it into manageable pieces. No surprise, chain saws weren't something the federal government typically issued to Marines. So we drove to the nearest Lowe's. After we explained the situation to the store manager, who regarded us with a frown, he relented and lent us four chain saws as well as a couple of extra ladders. He simply asked that we bring them back "not too broken," as I recall. By that night, we had cut out the tree and slung a tarp over the hole in the roof, but only after destroying one of the chain saws. When I brought it back to the store, the manager was good-natured about it, but he handed me an invoice for a few hundred dollars: "See what you can do."

Call me sentimental but I believe in the general goodness of people, particularly the American people

WE WOUND UP spending just over a month in New Orleans. My experiences there demonstrated how a community could falter but also how it could come together. It taught me about the nature of American collectivism, which is different from the centralized collectivism of other societies, like China or Singapore. When we submit our individual selves to the collective as Americans, we do so largely of our own free will, and because our submission is made freely, this country has through its history been able to at times act with an unmatched collective will. It's the same will that allowed us to overthrow the greatest empire on earth at our founding, to weather two world wars, to place a person on the moon and to lead the information revolution.

We're facing another test of that collective will now. We have only one another to rely on. Call me sentimental but I believe in the general goodness of people, particularly the American people, and I believe that that goodness will pull us through. These days, I've often thought of getting back from Katrina and coming into my Camp Lejeune office and seeing an envelope sitting on my desk. The guys in the platoon had taken up a collection. They knew the Marine Corps bureaucracy wouldn't foot the bill and so decided that we would. Inside was just enough to make the manager at Lowe's whole.

Ackerman's upcoming novel is Red Dress in Black and White

TED SOQUI—CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

GOING IT ALONE ISN'T AN OPTION

World leaders seem to have forgotten the power of international cooperation By Madeleine Albright

THE CORONAVIRUS THAT NOW POSES A DIRE THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH and to the world economy is so dangerous partly because it is novel—a new harm that our bodies and our governments must learn to face. But it is also a reminder of a lesson we should have learned long ago: that, to thrive, people of every nationality must combine strengths.

There is something childish about the belief that one can be safe behind a wall, a moat or even an ocean. The principal threats we face, even beyond pandemic disease, do not respect boundaries. They include rogue governments, terrorists, cyberwarriors, the uncontrolled spread of advanced weapons, multinational criminal networks and environmental catastrophe.

It was for good reason that world leaders strove in decades past to establish regional and global mechanisms to spur development, prevent war, promote health, regulate trade and prosecute crimes against humanity. The institutions created were often less efficient than one might hope. But they also helped us resolve dangerous conflicts and make unprecedented gains in, among other missions, alleviating poverty, expanding literacy and containing the ravages of diseases from polio and yellow fever to HIV/AIDS and Ebola.

Cooperation in 1955: shipping polio vaccines to Europe

PHOTO12/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP/GETTY IMAGES

This record is worth reflecting on at a time when most powerful national governments are not prioritizing international cooperation. That includes the idea's traditional champion: the U.S. From its first months, the Trump Administration has claimed that "the world is not a 'global community' but an arena where nations, nongovernmental actors and businesses engage and compete for advantage," as two Trump advisers wrote in 2017. In the President's vocabulary, *patriots* and *globalists* are on opposite ends of the spectrum—corresponding, respectively, to *right-minded* and *softheaded*.

In such thinking, Trump is not alone. Hypernationalist leaders around the globe seem determined to ignore the awareness of interdependence that was—in the past century—drummed into our minds at a nearly unbearable cost. Such leaders go beyond the expression of legitimate national pride into jingoism, which is defined as an overenthusiastic insistence on the superiority of a particular culture or country. Self-regard is inflated into feelings that are disdainful of others. In the process, recognition of the need to cooperate with those outside one's own group is blurred.

In the 1930s, jingoism enjoyed its golden age. As the League of Nations began to fall apart, Japan invaded Manchuria; Italy overran Ethiopia; and Germany annexed Austria, attacked Czechoslovakia and joined the Soviet Union in carving up Poland. The ensuing slaughter continued until 1945, when World War II ended and the horrors of the Holocaust were finally exposed.

That was 75 years ago—long enough, evidently, for our collective memory to slip. The deficit in cross-border diplomacy is evident in Libya, Yemen, Syria and terrorism-plagued Central Africa. The Trump Administration has loosened the shackles on Iran's nuclear program and failed to stop North Korea's. In Latin America, hard-line leaders threaten to haul the region back to the days when autocrats ruled and democrats were routinely jailed.

THERE IS A REAL DANGER that our future will be defined by clashes that could have been avoided. Look around: Where are the leaders who will remind us of our mutual obligations and shared fate? In Moscow? Beijing? London? Rome? Paris? New Delhi? Ankara? In Berlin, Chancellor Angela Merkel is on the way out. That leaves Washington.

In the U.S., pundits are fond of declaring, every four years, that the next election is the most important since George Washington put away his hair powder. This time around is no different. I can't be sure what historians will say about the balloting in 2020. I do know that a huge gap has opened between what the international community needs and the reality now in place. The size of this gap represents a failure on the part of leaders on every continent who would rather win cheap cheers at home than run the political risk of tackling hard problems abroad. But it reflects, as well, a vacuum at the top that only the U.S. can fill.

This troubled spring, as we sit at home for longer periods than usual, let us think about what the coronavirus is telling us and consider with care the choices we face. We can learn from history or repeat it. We can embrace our international responsibilities or go it alone. We can settle for the leadership we have endured these past few years or, when we vote this year, look for a President who understands how inseparable our fate is from that of the world.

Albright is a former U.S. Secretary of State and the author of Hell and Other Destinations

APART.
NOT ALONE

A CHEF'S MISSION

In the community formed by catastrophe, José Andrés sees a way to serve

By Sean Gregory

NOT MANY PEOPLE WERE GETTING ON AIRPLANES IN THE U.S. ON March 12, and even fewer were heading for the *Grand Princess* cruise ship. COVID-19 was discovered among the ship's 2,400 passengers after it set sail from Hawaii, making the vessel about as popular as the Flying Dutchman; the *Grand Princess* had to loiter off the California coast for days before being given permission to berth.

But here was José Andrés, marching down an air bridge in Newark, N.J., for a 6:30 a.m. flight to San Francisco. His beige, many-pocketed vest and matching cap put out a vaguely fisherman vibe, but anyone who placed Andrés—he's a celebrity chef—might also recognize the gear he changes into when he's racing to the scene of disaster. The flight was long, and there was plenty of time to contemplate the dimensions of the catastrophe already silently spreading across the country below.

"I feel like if something major happens, the America we see from this window …" he says, trailing off as he looks out over the Rocky Mountains. He had mentioned the shortages of surgical masks and coronavirus tests, and now let the next thought remain unspoken. "This is like a movie, man. Maybe we're overreacting. But it's O.K. to overreact in this case."

Andrés' rapidly expanding charity, World Central Kitchen, is as prepared as anyone for this moment of unprecedented global crisis. The nonprofit stands up field kitchens to feed thousands of people fresh, nourishing, often hot meals as soon as possible at the scene of a hurricane, earthquake, tornado or flood. As a global public-health emergency, COVID-

Andrés has won James Beard Foundation honors as outstanding chef and humanitarian

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN SCHOELLER FOR TIME

19 hasn't been limited to any one place. But it pulverizes the economy as it rolls across the world, and people need money to eat. World Central Kitchen already is distributing meals in low-income neighborhoods in big cities like New York, and monitoring the globe for food shortages elsewhere, some sure to be acute.

In the meantime, Andrés is a lesson of leadership in crisis. In a catastrophe in which the response of the U.S. government has been slow, muddled and unsure, his kitchen models the behavior—nimble, confident, proactive—the general public needs in a crisis (and, so far, has provided it more reliably than the federal government). Consider the *Grand Princess*. President Donald Trump made crystal clear he would have preferred that people remain on the vessel so the infected passengers would not increase the tally of cases he appeared to see as a personal scoreboard ("I like the numbers being where they are"). Then, a few breaths later, the President said he was deferring to experts, which made life easier for the quarantined passengers and crew who disembarked, a few hundred at a time, over a week, but harder for Americans looking for the clear, unambiguous instruction that's so essential to public health. "We have a President more worried about Wall Street going down," says Andrés, "than about the virus itself."

At the port of Oakland, where the *Grand Princess* finally docked, Andrés' team made its own statement. Setting up a tent at the side of the ship, it forklifted fresh meals not only for the quarantined passengers but also for the crew. "When we hear about a tragedy, we all kind of get stuck on 'What's the best to way to help?'" playwright and producer Lin-Manuel Miranda, who first connected with Andrés in 2017 during the Hurricane Maria relief efforts, tells TIME. "He just hurries his ass over and gets down there."

Andrés, at the age of 50, is charismatic, impulsive, fun, blunt and driven, an idealist who feeds thousands and a competitor who will knock you out of the lane on the basketball court. He is also among America's best-known cooks. His ThinkFoodGroup of more than 30 restaurants includes locations in Washington, D.C.; Florida; California; New York and five other states; and the Bahamas. They run the gamut from avant-garde fare to a food court that the New York *Times* restaurant critic called the best new establishment in New York in 2019. But in recent years, Andrés, an immigrant from Spain, has attracted more attention with his humanitarian work. World Central Kitchen prepared nearly 4 million meals for residents of Puerto Rico in the wake of the devastation wrought by Maria (he titled his best-selling book about it *We Fed an Island*). The organization has launched feeding missions in 13 countries, serving some 15 million meals and corralling more than 45,000 volunteers. Andrés was nominated for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.

Upon landing in the Bay Area, he hopped on the phone with Nate Mook, World Central Kitchen's executive director, to discuss a potential partnership with Panera Bread to give away meals. He put on a mask and visited the kitchen his organization had set up at the University of San Francisco, where several dozen workers prepared jambalaya and salads for quarantined passengers. He thanked his workers—many of whom are veterans of past feeding efforts—but noted the risks of overcrowding a relief kitchen in the era of COVID-19. "Less people is better," he told a World Central Kitchen staffer. "If not, we're going to fall like flies."

Next stop: the cruise ship, to distribute meals. On the ride over the Bay Bridge to Oakland, Andrés was already managing past the task at hand, as he spoke to Mook about financing a mass feeding program. "This is going to be something remembered in the history books," he says. "This is going to be beyond Sept. 11, beyond Katrina. Think big. Because every time we think big, we deliver. And the money always shows up." Later that evening, Andrés and his staff huddled with leaders of an Oakland-based company, Revolution Foods, who have contracts to cook and deliver school lunches: they've continued operating during the COVID-19 emergency. Andrés urged the company's CEO and head chef to isolate cooks so they steer clear of infection. He coached them on forging partnerships: with restaurants ordered shuttered, Andrés noted, many cooks will soon be out

CHRISTOPHER GREGORY-RIVERA FOR TIME

In January, Andrés stirs a pan in Puerto Rico after an earthquake

of work and itching to help.

"My friends," Andrés told his staff, "maybe this is why World Central Kitchen was created."

It was during Hurricane Maria that Andrés learned to cut through government bureaucracy to fill a leadership vacuum and feed the masses. From a niche nonprofit supporting sustainable-food and clean-cooking initiatives in underdeveloped countries like Haiti, World Central Kitchen has become the world's most prominent first responder for food. In some ways, the face of global disaster relief is a burly man fond of shouting "Boom!" when he hears something he likes, and leaning his body into yours when he wants to make a point. Andrés and his field workers flock to disaster sites across the world, often acting as some of the first on-the-ground social-media reporters. They've deployed to wildfires in California, an earthquake in Albania, a volcanic eruption in Guatemala.

'We need to make sure we are building walls that are shorter and tables that are longer.'

When Hurricane Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas last September, World Central Kitchen commandeered helicopters and seaplanes to take meals to the Abaco Islands, which lay in rubble. "In the end, we brought hope as fast as anybody has ever done it," says Andrés. "No one told me I'm in charge of feeding the Bahamas. I said I'm in charge of feeding the Bahamas." This year, World Central Kitchen workers went to Australia to help residents affected by the bushfires, and to Tennessee after tornadoes in the Nashville area killed at least 25 people.

It was not caught flat-footed by the coronavirus. In February, World Central Kitchen forklifted food onto another infected Princess cruise ship, the *Diamond Princess,* docked off Yokohama, Japan. Field-operations chief Sam Bloch had flown from the bushfire mission in Australia to Los Angeles and rerouted himself back across the Pacific. On March 15, as states ordered public spaces closed, Andrés announced the conversion of five of his D.C.-area restaurants, and his outlet in New York City, into community kitchens. As of March 25, World Central Kitchen has worked with partners to coordinate delivery, via 160 distribution points, of more than 150,000 safe, packaged fresh meals for families in New York City; Washington, D.C.; Little Rock, Ark.; Oakland; New Orleans; Los Angeles; Miami; Boston; and Madrid. Across the country, the organization's "Chefs for America" online map pinpoints 346 restaurants and 567 school districts providing meals. On March 23 and 24, Andrés drove around D.C. to give out more than 13,000 N95 respirator masks, left over from prior World Central Kitchen cruise feeding operations, to health care workers fighting COVID-19 on the front lines.

"We need to make sure we are building walls that are shorter and tables that are longer," Andrés likes to say, making explicit his difference with Trump. He pulled out of a restaurant deal at Trump's D.C. hotel after the candidate announced his campaign by referring to Mexicans as "rapists." (The Trump Organization sued; ThinkFoodGroup countersued; the case was settled.) During the government shutdown in early 2019, World Central Kitchen and partners cooked 300,000 meals for furloughed federal workers living paycheck to paycheck. On a plane to Las Vegas recently, Andrés told me, a Trump supporter said to him that although he knew the chef didn't like "my boy," he still considered Andrés a good guy.

"What we've been able to do," says Andrés, "is weaponize empathy. Without empathy, nothing works."

ANDRÉS WAS RAISED in the north of Spain, the son of nurses. Cooking was always alluring. "The touching, the transformation of things, the smells of it, the tastes of it, it brought people together," Andrés says. "I love clay. I

love fire. Maybe I'm a distant relative of Prometheus." He is fond of telling one story: when he was a boy, he always wanted to stir the paella pan, but his father wouldn't let him cook. He first had to learn to control the fire.

After culinary school in Barcelona and a stint in the Spanish navy cooking for an admiral, Andrés arrived in New York City in 1991 as a 21-year-old chef with $50 in his pocket. He moved to D.C. a few years later to help start a Spanish-themed restaurant, Jaleo, and helped popularize tapas in the U.S. Success gave him the freedom to open more restaurants and experiment with new fare. In 2016, minibar, in D.C., which offers a tasting menu of a few dozen small courses, earned the coveted two-star Michelin rating. "He's probably the most creative chef in the world today," says French chef Eric Ripert, whose own flagship New York restaurant, Le Bernardin, regularly ranks among the best on the planet. Ripert points to a waffle stuffed with foie gras mousse, served at barmini—minibar's companion cocktail and snack lounge—as an Andrés creation that blew him away. "Waffles are not supposed to be savory," he says. "Your chances of success with that are almost none. You see it coming and you're like, 'What is that?' It's full of surprise."

In an interview a few years back, Andrés, who became a U.S. citizen in 2013, said he speaks to his ingredients. But when I ask if he actually talks to his garlic, he says don't take him literally. "If you are a cook and you don't understand the history and physics behind water, of tomatoes, it's very difficult for you to do anything. Come on, talking to ingredients is just, Are you aware of what you have in your hands? Are you deep in thought?"

While Andrés' restaurants caught on in the 1990s and his profile continued to rise—a PBS show, *Made in Spain,* for example, debuted in 2008—he homed in on philanthropy. He lent time and resources to D.C. Central Kitchen, a local charity that not only feeds the capital's homeless and residents in need but also trains them to find cooking jobs. It was in 2010—after he visited Haiti following the earthquake that year—that he founded World Central Kitchen. "My whole history with him has been listening to him and saying, 'You're crazy,'" says D.C. Central Kitchen founder Robert Egger. "Then he does it. At this point if he comes to me and has an idea for an intergalactic kitchen, I'm like, 'F-cking A, that's good. I'm on board.'"

Cooking with his daughter in the Spanish countryside

Andrés, left, with his mother and younger brother, grew up in northern Spain

The organization pitched in on Hurricane Sandy relief in 2012, and in August 2017, Andrés traveled to Houston to help mobilize chefs after Hurricane Harvey. The work all led up to Hurricane Maria, which made landfall that September. "Puerto Rico was that moment where it's like, O.K., it's time to put into practice all that we've been soaking up over the years," says Mook, World Central Kitchen's executive director. "We saw the sheer paralysis of the government's response. We realized we were on the brink of a humanitarian crisis. We said, Let's start somewhere. Let's start cooking." (Andrés appeared on TIME's list of the 100 most influential people in the world in both 2012 and 2018.)

Andrés takes pride that his team doesn't just parachute in. They stick around

World Central Kitchen has figured out that rather than relying on packaged food airlifted in from the outside—"meals ready to eat" (MREs) in relief parlance—Andrés and his team can tap into existing supply chains and local chefs to prepare hot meals. As its profile has expanded, its revenues have ballooned from around $650,000 in 2016 to $28.5 million in 2019, and the organization now has the wherewithal to hire local help—as well as send out its own operations experts—to kick-start the food economy. Some two-thirds of World Central Kitchen's 2019 revenues, or $19.1 million, came from individual donations, ranging from large gifts from philanthropists, including from Marc and Lynne Benioff, TIME's owners and co-chairs, to kids giving $6 out of their allowance. Former President Bill Clinton, whose Clinton Global Initiative has supported World Central Kitchen, says Andrés' empathic action is more crucial than ever in these divided times. "If you spend more time on your fears than your hopes, on your resentments than your compassions, and you divide people up, in an interdependent world, bad things are going to happen," Clinton, who first spent significant time with Andrés in Haiti after the earthquake, tells TIME. "If that's all you do, you're not helping the people who have been victimized or left behind or overlooked. He's a walking model of what the 21st century citizen should be."

ABOUT TWO MONTHS before his trip to Oakland, Andrés stomped into another airport, in San Juan, the first person off his flight from Washington, D.C.

With a World Central Kitchen staffer at a quarantined cruise ship in Oakland in March

Andrés works on a dish at minibar, one of his Washington, D.C., restaurants, in 2010

"Go do your thing, chef," a man sitting at another gate told him as he made his way through the terminal. A 6.4-magnitude earthquake had brought Andrés back. A car was waiting to take him to the south, where the tremors damaged homes and left hungry people sleeping under tents. As his ride rushed through a lush green Puerto Rican mountainside, Andrés offered a master class in multitasking, one moment conducting ThinkFoodGroup business over the phone—"I never saw the deal. I need to see the deal before I sign sh-t," he barked at one executive—while in another prepping his World Central Kitchen field workers for his arrival. "I've got good news and bad news," he told one of them. "The bad news is, I'm coming …"

Working for the blunt Andrés is not for the faint of heart. On the other hand, the chaos of a restaurant kitchen translates into a disaster area. He often rubs his eyes and tugs at his beard, before expressing frustration. "I would like to say you put too much food on a tray," he tells a few of his workers in Puerto Rico. "But that never f-cking happens."

During his 36 hours in Puerto Rico, Andrés pinballed to some half dozen World Central Kitchen sites to assist with the feeding efforts, at baseball fields, a track-and-field facility and a smaller indoor kitchen in the city of Ponce, where workers prepared ham-and-cheese sandwiches with globs of mayo. ("Makes them easy for the elderly to chew," Andrés says.) In Peñuelas, the chef shared a quiet conversation with an overwhelmed food-truck operator World Central Kitchen had hired, urging her to change the menu for dinner before patting her on the back and departing for his next stop. In Guayanilla, Andrés went bed to bed handing out solar lights to frightened residents sleeping outside in the dark. In Yauco, he stirred meat sauce in one of World Central Kitchen's signature giant paella pans. Within days of the earthquake, Andrés' operation was serving 12,000 meals a day in Puerto Rico.

On the early-morning flight to Fort Lauderdale, Andrés earned the title of loudest snorer on board. He had been up late the previous night, enjoying a few pops of his go-to drink, the rum sour, at the San Juan restaurant whose namesake chef, Jose Enrique, first opened his kitchen doors to Andrés after Maria. And he had woken up that morning for a radio interview before the flight. In Florida, he would catch a private charter to Hurricane Dorian–damaged Marsh Harbour in the Bahamas, where hollowed-out cars still lie by the side of the road and only a stove remains where a kitchen once stood in most people's homes. Although the hurricane had struck more than three months earlier, World Central Kitchen still had a strong presence: Andrés takes pride that his team doesn't just parachute in. They stick around.

Andrés went door to door, distributing some two dozen hot meals, continuing his deliveries well past dark. Afterward, he was genuinely hurt that a few of his relief workers were too wiped out to join him for dinner and a few drinks. He napped again on the ride back to the hotel—his head bobbed with such force, it seemed in danger of collapsing to the ground. But once at the hotel he wanted to stay up a little longer, sip Irish whiskey on the beach and stare at the stars.

Perhaps Andrés crashes so hard because he lives in perpetual motion, often acting on impulse. His "plans" deserve quotation marks. He'll shout, "Let's go," in his booming voice—then stick around for another hour, taking pictures, lugging a crate of apples to help feed people, talking to anyone within earshot. After leaving the cruise ship in Oakland, Andrés and his team were scheduled to hunker down in a San Francisco hotel room to figure out their strategy for feeding America in the wake of COVID-19. A staffer worked the phones to reserve a conference room. First, however, a spontaneous lunch interrupted: Andrés took five workers to a favorite Chinese restaurant, which was nearly empty because of coronavirus fears, for piles of dim sum. Then Andrés declared he wanted to move the meeting to a park. Then, instead of squatting in grass, Andrés decided that everyone, including himself, needed to find a barber to shave their beards and shorten their hair after a social-media user pointed out that facial hair can reduce the effectiveness of the N95 masks World Central Kitchen workers had been wearing. Andrés, who had been up until at least 2 a.m. on the East Coast before catching his early-morning transcontinental flight, passed

CRUISE SHIP: SCOTT HOAG—WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN; MINIBAR: SARAH L. VOISIN—THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES

out in the barber's chair, shaving cream smeared across his neck.

What looks like a scatterbrained approach can work in managing a crisis: while visiting the Bahamas, Andrés was in constant contact with his team in Puerto Rico, where another 6.0-magnitude earthquake hit after he left. But human relations are something else. If he's idling on Twitter when you ask for his attention, it can be grating. "He's the salt to my life because he really brings the color and the flavor," says Andrés' wife Patricia, who also hails from Spain; she met him in D.C. in the 1990s. "But sometimes I want to kill him, O.K.? Don't misunderstand me. Or throw him out the window."

Andrés is sometimes so in his head and on mission, he's oblivious to his surroundings. He'll open a car door before the vehicle comes to a complete stop. He has a habit of walking in circles, staring straight ahead, while on important cell-phone calls: in Marsh Harbour, a car pulling into a takeout shop nearly hit him. In Ponce, while showing someone the proper angle at which he wanted to take a picture of lettuce growing in a greenhouse, he leaned against a rail and nearly took out a portion of the crop.

Andrés 'wants to take the lead in feeding America' after the COVID-19 outbreak

But a tendency to distraction belies his intense focus on whatever he's trying to accomplish. Andrés plays to win. The day before the NBA's All-Star Celebrity Game in February, I joined him for a training session at the National Basketball Players Association gym in New York City. His friend José Calderón, a former NBA player from Spain, works as a special assistant to the union's executive director. During a game of 3-on-3, Andrés fouled me with his shoulders, barely attempting to move his feet. He employed similar tactics, it turns out, while playing with his daughters in the driveway of their Bethesda, Md., home. "We were 10, 12 years old, and he didn't care," says his eldest daughter Carlota, 21. "We were on the floor." He wasn't much nicer to the officials at their youth hoops contests. "He would get kicked out of my games multiple times," Carlota says. "I think it started when I was in second grade."

He brings both temper and tenderness. "I am getting very anxious," he said in a raised voice at one of his relief workers over the phone in Puerto Rico. "Can we for once f-cking show up at the same time and the same place … Are we in control, or are we not in control?" But he'll later tell his crew how proud he is of them, or how much he loves them. When he got wind that classmates were telling the 9-year-old daughter of one of his workers that she might get coronavirus because her father was working near the cruise ship, Andrés grabbed his colleague's phone and recorded a video message for her and two younger siblings. "Your daddy is a hero, period," Andrés said, choking up slightly. "So don't worry, your daddy is going to be home soon and he is going to be taking care of all of you. And I only want you to be super proud of your dad."

In the Bahamas, a woman yelled out to Andrés from her car and simply put her hands together, as if she were in church; it was her way of telling him he's a blessing. On his way to his office in D.C. in February, a woman from Japan stopped to thank him for feeding the cruise-ship passengers docked in Yokohama. And as he walked through downtown San Francisco, puffing on a cigar, a woman approached him gingerly to tell him that she's donated to World Central Kitchen and that it was an honor to meet him. She then tiptoed away, as if she'd just disturbed rare air.

HIS DECISION TO HEAD to San Francisco—where one of his workers wore a hazmat suit as he drove the forklift of food to the cruise ship—didn't make much sense to me. The World Central Kitchen team was handling the feeding just fine. The mission was winding down. D.C. was going to serve as the Chefs for America command center to address hunger caused by COVID-19 disruptions. So why would the man who says he "wants to take the lead in feeding America" after the outbreak risk getting sick, or grounded, 2,500 miles away from home base?

This line of inquiry annoys him. "Sh-t, I want to be with the guys to see it and give thanks," says Andrés on the flight west. "What a question to ask. Like, why the f-ck do you get married?" At the University of San Francisco kitchen, a chef who has worked on prior World Central Kitchen missions lights up when she spots Andrés. They exchange a hug. Andrés turns my way. "You ask me why I come," he says. "What the f-ck? What's wrong with you?"

Andrés has something in common with his buddy Clinton: he craves connecting with people. His public face—yukking it up on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,* pumping up World Central Kitchen on social media, giving booming speeches to audiences that hang on every word—has earned him a reputation as a tireless advocate for humanity. But he doesn't always feel so fresh himself. On the flight from Florida to the Bahamas in January, Andrés finally set aside his phone, reclined and admitted that the expectations of feeding the world, and running some 30 restaurants, weigh on him. Over the past few years, both his parents have died. His good friend Anthony Bourdain committed suicide. Two of his daughters left for college. "You wake up in the morning, and you're like, oooof," says Andrés. Sometimes he feels like staying in bed. "All of this is happening in front of you and you feel like you're losing control."

CHRISTOPHER GREGORY-RIVERA FOR TIME

He also has to fight getting in too deep. "My biggest worry is that the dream of feeding the world takes a toll on me that it becomes almost sickening," Andrés says. "You become totally obsessed with it. You're enjoying dinner somewhere, and you're checking your phone. Has there been an earthquake? What's happening in Syria? What the f-ck happened there, how are we not there? I have a company to run. I have a family. I cannot disappear from the life of other people that need me too."

Patricia remembers her husband waking up one morning anxious around three years ago, before Hurricane Maria, when he was already a famed, award-winning chef. "He's like, What am I going to do with my life?" she says. "Am I doing enough? I'm not doing anything." He still expresses such sentiments. "He doesn't look at what he has done," she says. "He is looking at what he still has to do."

Those closest to him worry that all the work is wearing him down. "I wish he could lose some weight and get fit," says Patricia. That Nobel Peace Prize nomination and the global adoration are nice and all: just imagine, she jokingly tells him, what he could do if he were in better shape.

"The only thing I worry is, I don't think he spends enough time taking care of José," says Clinton. "He works a lot. I don't want him to burn out. I don't want him to drop dead someday because he has a heart attack, because he never took the time to exercise, and relax and do what he needs to do. He's a treasure. He's a national treasure for us, and a world treasure now. He's really one of the most special people I've ever known."

Andrés shoos away all calls to slim down: he insists he runs 325 days a year. He allows, however, that the suffering he's seen up close at disaster scenes—dead bodies, elderly people sleeping in soiled beds, starving people eating roots and drinking filthy water—strains his mind. To cope, he sometimes turns to what he calls a "strange thought" for solace. The thought is that as more climate disasters inevitably hit both the developed and underdeveloped worlds, poor people in places like the Bahamas and Puerto Rico may at least be better equipped to cope. "This gives me a little bit of strange happiness only in the sense saying, You know one thing? Maybe life is preparing them for a worse moment," says Andrés. "And actually the fittest will survive and it's not me, it's not us, it's them."

Meanwhile, Andrés vows that World Central Kitchen will continue to grow. Splitting time between the nonprofit and his restaurants hadn't hurt business before the COVID-19 shutdown. On the contrary, revenues had doubled in the past two years, thanks in large part to the opening of Mercado Little Spain, the food market in Manhattan's Hudson Yards complex, though the goodwill Andrés has earned through World Central Kitchen and his rising profile have also helped. Andrés believes World Central Kitchen, at 10 years old, is still in its infancy. He and his team are learning as they go, and he's confident that with COVID-19 threatening Americans' familiar way of living, World Central Kitchen will pass its biggest test yet.

"We will be there to cover the blind spots that the system will have," Andrés says curbside at SFO, before boarding his flight back home to D.C. "You cannot expect in a crisis like this that the government will cover everything, that the super big NGOs will cover everything. We've already been the first ones in the front lines. And I have a feeling we'll be the last ones leaving the front lines. That's always the case."

Let's go.

Andrés with displaced residents in Puerto Rico after a January earthquake

THE UNITERS

A physician on the front line, a teacher who teaches tolerance and 25 other remarkable people bridging America's divides in trying times

CHRIS EVANS

Seeking straight talk from elected officials

A FEW YEARS AGO, ACTOR CHRIS EVANS WAS watching pundits debate, when he realized that he—someone who's passionate and outspoken about politics, particularly on social media—didn't actually know that much about the policy being discussed. "When I went to try and educate myself a bit," he says, "I thought it was shockingly difficult to find a simple way in." What he realized he wanted was straightforward and not necessarily journalism: a place to hear directly from elected officials on what they believe about different subjects—not mediated through think pieces or filtered by talking heads on cable news. He tapped a friend, actor and director Mark Kassen, to develop it with him; they brought in Joe Kiani, a tech entrepreneur who was well networked in Washington. Together, the three fleshed out their vision for a hub where politicians could speak, in brief videos, about where they stood on issues from immigration to trade. "When you have a democracy," says Kiani, "you need an engaged, knowledgeable citizenry." They called their site A Starting Point.

If only it were that simple. Evans is the first to admit it was an uphill battle to earn the trust of politicians in D.C., who knew him best as Captain America, not as someone trying to change the way Americans formed opinions about policy. To that end, whether users who have become increasingly siloed in echo chambers of confirmation bias will want to hear from polarized politicians at all remains to be seen. A planned unveiling at South by Southwest was derailed after the conference was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic; now, they're regrouping on a launch date as the world moves into an unprecedented era. But with more Americans staying home and looking for clear information about where their elected officials stand on issues like health care reform that have immediate and urgent consequences, there may be more need than ever for a site like this—though Evans resists the suggestion that the current crisis could be advantageous for his project. "I will say that when things like this happen, people just long for functional, effective government," Evans says. "In times of crisis, we crave efficacy. Then, once it's passed, we look for accountability."

'In times of crisis, we crave efficacy.'

When A Starting Point launches later this year, users will discover that it is a well-organized inventory of information untangling arcane issues in plain language. The utility of a project like this is clear, especially amid a public-health crisis with a critical election looming. Evans hopes it helps inform: "I've been guilty of participating in political debates where I didn't have all the information," he says. And after working through so many challenges—like implementation of exhaustive fact-checking standards, working with politicians who were reticent to answer sensitive questions, and concerns that the site would become a means to propagandize—he's now sanguine about its eventual prospects. "In three months, I could look back at this endeavor and realize I had incredible moral and cultural blind spots," he says. "But right now it feels like a pretty decent step in the right direction. All we can do is try to increase knowledge and understanding of how government works, and who the people are in power, and what policies they're writing." For Evans, it's a fitting pivot: right now, Americans may not need a superhero—they just need answers. —SAM LANSKY

PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN PFLUGER FOR TIME

CHRISTOPHER EMDIN

Teaching teachers

Christopher Emdin believes hip-hop can make better teachers. "It's about telling stories," he says. Emdin, an associate professor at Columbia University's Teachers College, has spent more than a decade working to bridge the cultural divide between teachers and students, especially when the teaching workforce fails to reflect student diversity. The author of *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood ... and the Rest of Y'all Too,* Emdin, 41, wants teachers to engage with students "on their own cultural turf," and he launched the #HipHopEd initiative to get teachers to incorporate hip-hop into their lessons. The goal is to transform how teachers engage with young people and how students engage with their educations as a result. "The system, as it exists, just doesn't do well for a vast majority of young people," he says. "We just have to change it." *—Katie Reilly*

PATRICIA TÉLLEZ-GIRÓN

Medical messenger

On a recent Monday, Dr. Patricia Téllez-Girón, 51, answered questions on a radio show about the coronavirus in Spanish for the Latinx audience of Madison, Wis. The segment had been scheduled to last two hours, but for members of the concerned audience, the chance to hear from a professional in their own community in their own language was particularly valuable—and so the show went on an additional hour. It was one of many efforts by Téllez-Girón to educate and protect the community from COVID-19.

Téllez-Girón, a physician in Madison and an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, has played an active role in community organizing efforts ever since she moved to Madison in 1993 from Mexico City. She has now co-chaired the Latino Health Council there for 20 years and mentors young aspiring Latinx medical professionals. And to her, a crisis like the coronavirus outbreak highlights the vulnerability of the Latinx community of Dane County, Wisconsin. Immigration status, high poverty rates, large households and employment in the types of jobs that can't be done from home all put people at risk. It can be hard to find reliable public-health information in Spanish even at the best of times; right now, bridging the divide between Spanish-speaking people and the U.S. public-health system is a matter of life and death.

"Very few organizations were actually keeping an eye on our community," Téllez-Girón says. "That's why, as usual, when something like [COVID-19] happens, the Latinx community leadership right away starts organizing. We don't wait for others to come and help us. However, we really want others to be aware that we are here."

So, together with the Latino Consortium for Action and other groups in the community, Téllez-Girón is helping to lead the Latinx charge against COVID-19. "This is just the beginning," she says. "We're sending a very strong message to the community that we are here, we need help and we need to work together." *—Jasmine Aguilera*

JASON MACOVIAK

Beyond books

Picture a library. Is someone telling you to shush? When Jason Macoviak became manager of Copper Queen Library in Bisbee, Ariz., the first thing he did was get rid of "all of that." Macoviak, 45, and his team redid the layout of the building to create a "community living room," encouraging patrons to talk and "get to know their neighbor." His team also revamped part of an abandoned middle school into a public space that teaches literacy to children and adults. Called the San Jose Annex, it opened in 2018 with the help of the whole community: a local nonprofit designed the layout; the high school shop class built shelving; volunteers help keep it running. In 2019, Copper Queen Library was awarded Best Small Library in America by *Library Journal.* "Because we're small," Macoviak says, "we know everyone. ***—Madeleine Carlisle***

KASSY ALIA RAY

Civic duty

Grief makes many people turn inward. Others, like Kassy Alia Ray, 32, use their pain to open up. Ray's late husband Greg Alia was a police officer killed in the line of duty in 2015 in Columbia, S.C. At the time, debates about police brutality dominated headlines. Ray, a community psychologist, decided to work on easing the tension that can be fatal to both officers and those they're meant to protect. Since 2018, her nonprofit Serve & Connect has done the complex work of building trust between the two groups—for example, outfitting officers with some 40,000 meals to give to food-insecure families they encounter on the job. "Issues like hunger and poverty and trauma are really at the root of a lot of things," she says. *—Katy Steinmetz***

EMDIN: LAURA YOST; TÉLLEZ-GIRÓN: JOHN MANIACI—UW MADISON SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH; MACOVIAK: BRIDGET SHANAHAN; RAY: STEPHANIE TASSONE

JODY WHITE

Delivering normalcy

As the coronavirus outbreak has shut down schools across the country, it has complicated the lives of families who rely on the facilities for meals. Some school districts in states like Oregon, South Carolina and Georgia are trying to make sure these meals get delivered to students—and Jody White, 56, a bus driver in Estacada, Ore., is one of many nationwide who are staying on the road despite closures to make sure students on free and reduced-price lunch plans still get fed. "I'm pretty sure they look forward to it because when we pull up they're all smiles," White says. "This, right now, what we're going through, is not the norm for [kids], and so when they see a bus pull up, that's the norm for them," she says. "It helps them a little bit, I hope." She has some evidence it's working: she's been inundated with thank-you cards "from almost every stop."
—Sanya Mansoor

TARA HOUSKA

A link between worlds

When bankers and oil-company execs need a Native American perspective on infrastructure projects affecting tribal lands, they often call up Tara Houska, 35, an Ojibwe lawyer and environmental activist. "I'm trying to be a bridge between those two different worlds," she says.

Houska gained prominence during the 2016–2017 protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) for calling on banks to divest from the pipeline and documenting inhumane treatment of protesters supporting the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. In March 2017, she was part of a delegation of indigenous women who briefed officials from Norway's $1 trillion oil fund. That same month, the fund divested from DAPL, and that fall, it announced it was considering dumping its oil stocks. While the eventual sell-off was smaller than activists hoped, it represented a shift in awareness—and Houska says that since then, banks seem more aware that indigenous-led movements can have a real impact on their bottom line.

Nowadays, she's focused on a pipeline closer to her Minnesota home: the proposed expansion of Line 3, which could threaten the Anishinaabe territory's wild-rice production. She lives near the proposed route on an indigenous women-led camp she founded called the Giniw Collective. There, she juggles grant writing and calls from policymakers with looking for firewood, hunting and fishing. At a time of crisis in the U.S. and abroad, she says, that connection between tribal and nontribal life is more important than ever: "I hope the original peoples of the land are looked to for wisdom about how to be resilient."*—Olivia B. Waxman*

TIM BOYLE

Running strong

When Tim Boyle quit smoking in 2013, he decided to take up running—but staying motivated was tough, especially during winter in his hometown of Fargo, N.D. That is, until he heard that one way to overcome a disinclination to run is to remember those who would love to run but can't. Boyle, 48, posted about this on Facebook, and his friend Michael Wasserman, who has Down syndrome and hip dysplasia, said Boyle could run for him anytime. This exchange evolved into I Run 4, an organization that has matched some 17,000 runners with "buddies" who cannot run or have difficulty doing so; some of the pairs have ended up traveling halfway around the world to meet. "Both people are getting inspiration out of it," Boyle says. *—K.S.*

JAMIAH HARGINS

Growing together

Jamiah Hargins, a recruiter who lives in Los Angeles, started gardening in his backyard a few years ago and soon found himself with a big enough harvest to give food away to people who live on his street. It created a lighter mood, he says. He then turned to social networks to see if other gardeners had crops they'd like to trade. About 15 people came to the first meetup he organized, then 20, then 30. Now in its second year, the gathering has become an organization known as Crop Swap LA. Gardeners meet up monthly to exchange items like grapes and corn, but Hargins, 35, has also started dreaming bigger, talking about turning rooftops and yards across L.A. into yet more sources of local food. *—K.S.*

JOSEPH BUBMAN

Common ground

It's possible to wonder whether roads still run between the small towns and farms that constitute one America and the suburbs and cities that make up another. "There's been a real sorting," says Joseph Bubman, executive director of Urban Rural Action, a nonprofit devoted to bridging this divide in U.S. politics and society. The group picks two places about 100 miles apart—the flagship pairing is Adams County, Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia—and searches for common ground on an issue that matters in both. In one session, small-town gun-shop owners sat down with urban violence-prevention activists. The goal there wasn't consensus, Bubman says, but "an openness toward collaboration." Urban Rural Action has late-summer events planned in Gettysburg, Pa., Hagerstown, Md., and Claremont, N.H. Bubman says, "We very much intend to work in 50 states." *—Karl Vick*

EBOO PATEL

Belief in each other

In a crisis, Eboo Patel points out, we care less about what others believe and more about how they work together. That idea is the seed of the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), his Chicago-based nonprofit. On over 500 college campuses, IFYC brings people of different faiths together, shaping leaders who listen to all sides. "I like to say that diversity is not just the differences you like," says Patel, 44. "We fully acknowledge that people have very different ideas about creation and salvation. But we also know those lead to shared values." *—Belinda Luscombe*

PALEE MOUA AND MARILYN MOCHEL

Hope through healing

Gaps between traditional beliefs and mainstream medicine can leave people without care they need. That's why Palee Moua, a leader in the Merced, Calif., Hmong community, and nurse Marilyn Mochel started a project that, for nearly two decades, has integrated Hmong shamans into a local hospital, Dignity Health's Mercy Medical Center. "Before the program, there was so much fear, because nobody was allowed behind these closed doors," Mochel says. *—K.S.*

STEVE POWELL

Stylish support

Steve Powell provides the homeless with the rare gift of being fussed over. The idea for his mobile barber shop, dubbed Personal Enhancement Mobile, came to him after he fell asleep praying. He dreamed of people coming toward him upset and walking away happy. "We give them a haircut, clean them up really good, and we practice job interviews with them: "'Pretend I'm the boss,'" Powell says. "So when they come in and sit beside you, you don't know they're homeless." The client pool is anyone who's struggling, and the barbers include people working off community service. A veteran, Powell steers some to military recruiters. He's hoping to continue roaming Arkansas providing comfort, connections and confidence—even though the trailer that functions as the barber shop was just stolen, chairs and all. "The last time I saw it was Wednesday," Powell, 41, said on March 20. "We were eight people from 10,000 heads since 2015." *—K.V.*

KENNY KING AND WILLIAM MARSHALL

Together they pray

"Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning," Martin Luther King Jr. said in 1968, "is the most segregated hour of America." Even now, 80% of Protestant pastors say their church is mostly one race. So when Kenny King, 40, and William Marshall, 41, pastors in Sikeston, Mo., decided to merge congregations—one United Methodist with a largely black congregation and one Southern Baptist with white congregants—they expected some difficulties. But while the church, now called Grace Bible Fellowship, hasn't shied away from tough conversations, they've been meeting for six months and they're all still talking to one another. Their secret for getting past differences, apart from a belief in grace? "We ate a lot of barbecue," says Marshall. "It's hard not to love someone you're really listening to." *—B.L.*

WHITE: MAGGIE KELLY; HOUSKA: AYSE GURSOZ; BOYLE: COURTESY BOYLE; HARGINS: GIA TROVELA; BUBMAN: COURTESY BUBMAN; PATEL: COURTESY IFYC; MOUA AND MOCHEL: TATIANA VIZCAINO; POWELL: COURTESY POWELL; KING AND MARSHALL: KRISTINA WOODY—UNION UNIVERSITY

APART. NOT ALONE

JAYDE POWELL

Guardian angel

Jayde Powell was heading home to Las Vegas for spring break on March 13 when her mom ended their call so that amid COVID-19 fears, she could check on their elderly neighbors. The exchange got the 20-year-old thinking. That day, she created ads for Shopping Angels, a network to link seniors and immunocompromised people to volunteers who can deliver groceries and essentials. It soon "surpassed what I ever could have imagined," she says. Within a week, the group signed up more than 2,900 people across the U.S. who want to be volunteers. Powell, a premed student, expected to resume classes online March 23 but plans to keep the program going "as long as people are wanting to help." —*S.M.*

JIN-YA HUANG

Cooking up community

Jin-Ya Huang's parents were Taiwanese immigrants who owned a Chinese restaurant, Egg-roll Express, in Dallas, where her mother used the kitchen to train other immigrant women to cook. After her mother died in 2015, Huang, a photographer, wanted to honor her and to help some of the refugees whose stories she was telling in her work. The result was the catering company Break Bread Break Borders. Huang, 49, recruits women from refugee communities who love to cook. Her organization helps them get food-service licenses so they can start their own businesses, and anyone who hires the catering company can opt to hear from them about why they left their homes. "We are putting a face on food," Huang says. —*B.L.*

PAUL RAMSEY

Getting results

Watching the coronavirus crisis grow, Dr. Paul Ramsey, the CEO of UW Medicine, knew the University of Washington's virology laboratory was scientifically ready to process COVID-19 tests. What it needed was people. So, on March 13, Ramsey emailed the UW Medicine community asking for volunteers.

Qualified individuals from a variety of backgrounds dropped their research to help, and the lab is now processing COVID-19 tests 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Ramsey says UW Medicine has achieved a turnaround time of under 12 hours for results and hopes to eventually get through 10,000 tests a day.

And the volunteerism isn't limited to the lab: retirees have returned to work, and a UW database connects community members who want to be helpful. "Communities come together in times of crisis," Ramsey says. "So I'm pleased and proud but not surprised." —*M.C.*

BEN FINK AND PAULA GREEN

Personal politics

The 2016 election prompted mutterings that Americans should escape their echo chambers, but few did so as purposefully as a group called Hands Across the Hills. In 2017, rural voters from Letcher County, Kentucky, in Trump territory, traveled to meet with rural voters from Leverett, Mass., part of Clinton country—not to change each other's minds but to better understand one another's thinking. "People are really curious," says Ben Fink of the Letcher County Culture Hub, who helped organize the meeting. "We humanized each other," says Paula Green, a conflict-resolution expert who was on the Massachusetts side. The summit became an annual tradition; the group plans to meet for a fourth time in 2020—after the election. —*K.S.*

JASON MARSH

Kindness through science

What makes life meaningful? Why do people do good? The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, has grappled with such questions for nearly 20 years, translating and sharing research on social-emotional well-being so that those outside academia can put it to use in their daily lives. While many cultures have wrestled with "the good life," the center's aim is to create a common language for discussing the answers; they also recently launched a Bridging Differences project to share science-supported techniques for facilitating dialogue across divides. By connecting people doing that research with the people who need it most, says Jason Marsh, executive director of the center and editor in chief of its magazine Greater Good, "we can do so much more good in the world." —*M.C.*

SAIDEEPIKA RAYALA

Spreading the news to those who need it

In 2018, a high school student named Saideepika Rayala was learning about the importance of local news when she realized her parents weren't really consuming much of it. Her mom and dad had moved to Columbus, Ohio, from India, where they had grown up speaking Telugu, and although they would still read news from back home, in their native tongue, they didn't engage much with papers like the Columbus *Dispatch.*

Rayala, who noticed the same issue among refugees while volunteering with a local resettlement agency, saw this lack of interaction as a problem with effects that rippled out into the whole city, even the country. It meant that her parents and many other immigrants in the area weren't learning about important happenings like elections or getting to know their neighbors at community events. "There is a disconnect with immigrant communities and the local mainstream news," the 18-year-old says, "these large gaps where people are missing out on the opportunity to be civically engaged."

So Rayala decided to create a publication that spoke more directly to them. The Columbus Civic summarizes local and national news stories in languages like Telugu, Tamil and French and does so using journalistic styles that immigrants who speak those languages are used to. That's important, Rayala says, because there are cultural barriers as well as linguistic ones. Her father, for example, is perfectly fluent in English; inability to understand wasn't the reason he wasn't reading.

The Civic, delivered monthly via email, has 300 subscribers so far, and the high school senior—who tapped her own networks to find volunteer editors and translators —hopes to expand to Somali and Nepali too. "It's different reading news in your native language," Rayala says. "I want to connect people to the community they're living in." —*K.S.*

CATHY CHU

Ally for allies

By the late 1990s, gay-straight alliances—school clubs for LGBTQ youth and their non-LGBTQ supporters—had become so common in the Bay Area that an organization formed to connect and support them. That nonprofit, the GSA Network, operates nationwide but still has its heart in California, home to more than 1,100 clubs. Cathy Chu, 31, is now its director of youth organizing in the state, helping students unite when they want to push for change on a citywide or even statewide level. (In the Golden State, clubs are currently pushing for LGBTQ-inclusive sex education.) Chu says showing young people how to organize is partly about helping them effect the change they want to see right now, but it's also teaching them a lifelong skill. "They can learn how to fight for a better community, to live authentically and with pride," Chu says, "but also start to see their individual power to shape their larger condition." —*K.S.*

ERICA TURNER AND HEIDI WHEELER

Talking it out

Cedarburg, Wis. (pop. 11,536), is nearly 95% white. Residents Erica Turner and Heidi Wheeler bonded when Wheeler, 42, who is part of that majority, asked Turner, who isn't, if she could profile her family for a local magazine. Their talks about the difficulties of being a black woman in their community sparked something. Speaking out was nerve-racking, Turner, 47, says, but freeing too. The article led to the formation of a discussion group that tackles race relations, formalized as Bridge the Divide in 2018. Then came a podcast and events. "You can't talk about what's going on over there," Turner says, "if you haven't gotten your own house together." —*K.S.*

TONI COLLIER

Sharing experiences

As gathering director at Preemptive Love, a nonprofit that works to end violence and help areas affected by war, Toni Collier, 28, designs programs to help people hear each other. Since beginning her job in 2019, Collier has shepherded 16 gatherings at which people from different backgrounds come together to talk about their experiences—whether that means black mothers in Atlanta opening up about their fears while spending time with white police officers, or a white heterosexual woman learning about what life is like for a black homosexual man. "We're inviting people to bring their own identities, biases and anger to the table," she says. "It brings depth to the playing field because people realize what others deal with." —*Mahita Gajanan*

POWELL: THERESA DANNA—UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO; HUANG: DANNY FULGENCIO; RAMSEY: CLARE MCLEAN; FINK: MALCOLM J. WILSON; GREEN: COURTESY GREEN; MARSH: JIGAR MEHTA—THE GREATER GOOD SCIENCE CENTER; RAYALA: HR IMAGING; CHU: ANDREW PASCUAL; TURNER: STEPHANIE BARTZ—LOVE WISCONSIN; WHEELER: ANDREA ROSIN; COLLIER: GARRETT LOBAUGH

APART. NOT ALONE

HARMONY
Citizens of Milan take to their balconies on March 13 to serenade their neighbors; 10 days later, Italy had nearly 70,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and almost 7,000 dead

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALESSANDRO GRASSANI—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

ACROSS THE ISOLATION

As people around the world shelter in place, these images show how we're still caring for each other

APART.
NOT ALONE

CHIPPING IN

Clockwise from top left: John Foster Gunter, owner of Word of Mouth Café in Louisiana, and his sons prepare free plate lunches for the elderly; in Budapest, civil guards deliver food to the homebound; residents of Casa Cádiz, a shelter for homeless people and refugees in Barcelona, produce face masks for use in hospitals and nursing homes; Matt Remle, a Native liaison with the now shut-down Marysville school district, delivers sack lunches to students on the Tulalip Indian Reservation in Washington State

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MELINDA MARTINEZ—THE TOWN TALK/USA TODAY NETWORK/REUTERS; ZOLTAN BALOGH—EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK; SAMUEL ARANDA—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; DAVID RYDER—REUTERS

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SEEKING COMFORT
A man distributes giant teddy bears along emptied streets in Paris on March 15, the first day of the city's lockdown; nine days later, residents were allowed outside only for exercise once a day, within 1 km of their homes

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS DWORZAK—MAGNUM PHOTOS

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The Painted Ladies houses in San Francisco, where a "shelter in place" order is in effect, on March 19

ROZETTE RAGO—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

LOVE IS STAYING HOME

If we really care about the lives of others, we will endure inconveniences in order to protect them By Laura Turner

IN THE AFTERMATH OF MURDERING HIS BROTHER, Cain is posed a simple question by God. "Where is your brother Abel?" God asks. Cain—we imagine him here as a sullen teenager, which perhaps he was—responds with a question of his own. "I do not know," he says. "Am I my brother's keeper?" It's an insubordinate question, a trick of a young man trying to shirk responsibility and hide a dark secret.

I live in California, where the governor recently announced that all individuals must stay home or at their place of residence until further notice. That means not going out except for essential errands, like picking up groceries or medication or getting medical attention. My family and I are new to our neighborhood, and I've been eager to meet our neighbors, but the sheltering order has put a stop to our plans to knock on their doors with cookies and greetings.

Similar mandates, often called "shelter in place" orders, are likely to be enacted across the country as the coronavirus continues to infect and kill patients and potentially overwhelm our health care system. Since the virus can be transmitted by people who feel entirely well, staying home may be the best defense we have against spreading it. To stay home these days is to say yes to the question "Am I my brother's keeper?"

To stay home is to say yes to the question 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

MANY OF US have seen people posting on social media that they're frustrated about having to stay at home. We've seen photos of restaurants in which people are clearly not six feet apart, videos of spring breakers refusing to let a pandemic ruin their party. When I see these images, I think of my 88-year-old grandmother, who lives in Los Angeles. Under normal circumstances, she and her best friend—who is 93 and lives, independently, in the same condominiumcomplex—go out to eat a couple of times a week, usually to Olive Garden or In-N-Out or, for a nice occasion, the Cheesecake Factory. They attend church together. My grandmother goes to the library regularly, plays cards with friends, gets her hair done every few weeks by the same woman who has been doing it for decades.

This past week, my grandmother and her best friend both stayed home from church. They ate all their meals at home. My grandmother drove by the library to return the five novels she read last week. They were closed, which, I told her, was for the best. "You never know who touched those books last," I said. She agreed, although I knew she was sad that she couldn't get anything new to read. She lives alone and already spends a lot of her time feeling lonely.

My grandmother is one of the millions of people who are more likely to die if they contract the virus. You probably know one of these people too: someone with a compromised immune system, or an underlying condition, or someone over 65. When you're a healthy 34-year-old, as I am, the threat of the coronavirus can seem distant, just like the threat of death (though recent research suggests young people may be at higher risk than previously understood). And when you live in a culture that values individualism and productivity, as Americans do, it can be disorienting to be told that you can no longer do things the way you used to. But if I want to love my neighbors, it is my responsibility to do whatever I can—even things that inconvenience me—to prolong the lives of others.

After Cain asks God about being his brother's keeper, God responds with thunder. "Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!" Thousands of people have already died from this virus; scientists predict that millions more may still die. If I were to do anything to add to that number, the blood of those who died would cry out from the ground. By sacrificing our own routines and maybe even briefly our senses of identity, we keep our brothers and sisters safe.

Turner is a writer in San Francisco

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Time Off

GIRL TALK
Terry McMillan hops on FaceTime to chat about bold characters, comfort food and her new novel

INSIDE

THE OBAMAS PRODUCE A BUZZY NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY

HOW SAFE ARE OUR ELECTIONS, ANYWAY?

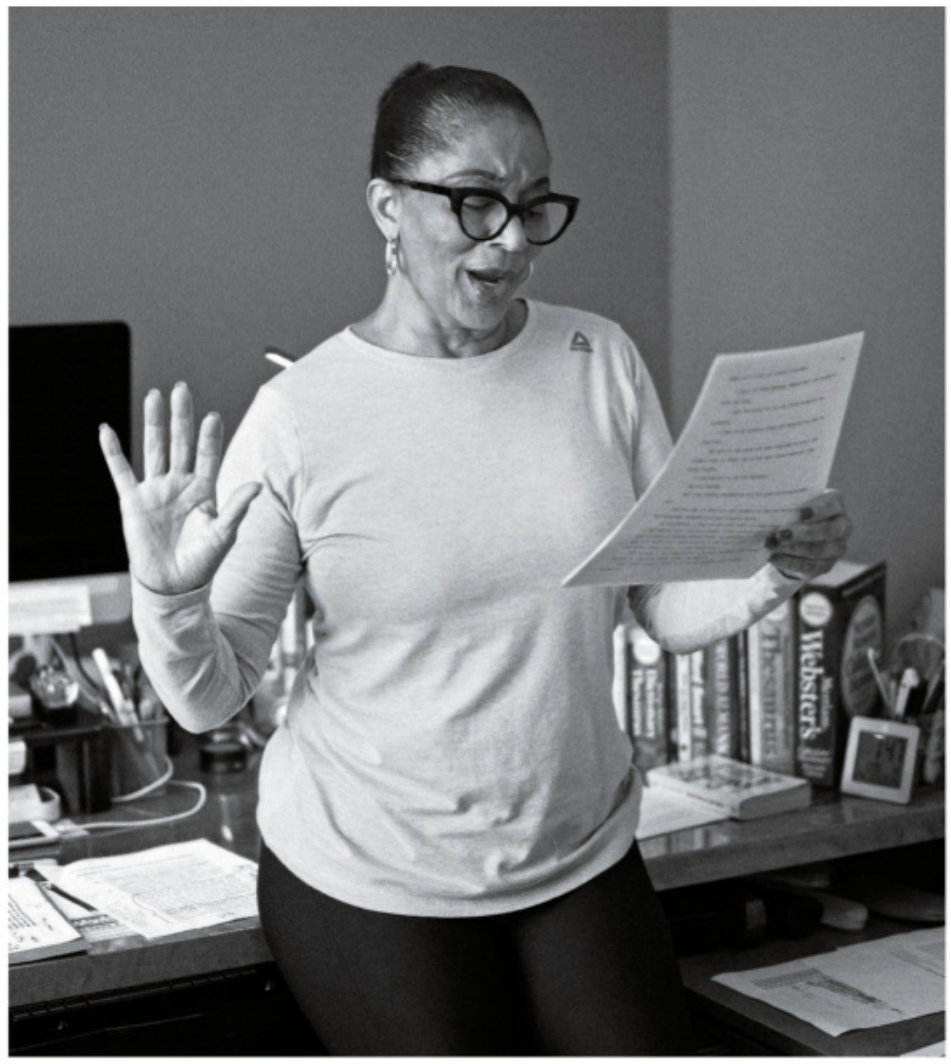
PROJECT RUNWAY *GETS REBORN—AGAIN*

ILLUSTRATION BY SHYAMA GOLDEN FOR TIME

BOOKS

Face time with Terry McMillan

By Kiley Reid



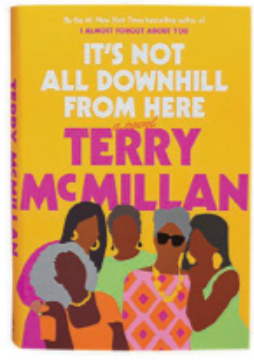
WHEN TERRY MCMILLAN POPS UP ON MY screen, she tells me that she never uses FaceTime. I was nervous to meet the best-selling author who has been diving headfirst into the interiority of black friendships, romantic relationships and class structures for more than 30 years. I'd watched the film adaptation of her novel *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* with my friends. I'd studied the dialogue between groups of women in *Waiting to Exhale* while attempting to write my own. And I'd marveled at her effortless wit and passion in interviews with Oprah and on *The Daily Show.*

Through the phone screen, I tell McMillan that I never FaceTime either—and felt like I had to put on makeup to see her. She confesses she did the same, and we assure each other that we look great. We'd long planned to meet this way out of convenience, but the COVID-19 outbreak has us realizing that this will become a temporary norm.

McMillan, 68, is a lot like her characters in that she's funny, comforting and still surprising. Talking to her feels like talking to an old friend, which is the same experience offered in her latest novel, *It's Not All Downhill From Here.* Her 12th book follows grouchy and loving diabetic grandmother Loretha Curry and her group of 60-something friends together grappling with aging, relationships and loss. McMillan explores seasons of grieving and rebirth much like they occur off the page—humorously, with heart and whether we'd like them to or not.

What did you set out to accomplish in this novel that's different from the others? I don't know if it's different from the others. I always believe that characters have to go through something, so I put my characters in every book in situations where they are being tested on any level: emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, sexually, financially. They have to figure out how to get through it or over it—I'm not going to have them go around it. And the more they try to bullsh-t themselves, the harder it is.

Writing about groups of friends, you manage so many bodies, opinions and voices in the same room. How do you corral multiple bold personalities into a single scene? I know my characters before I start to write. I do character profiles. You get a sense of how a character thinks, what their weaknesses are. I used to give them horoscopes and signs, as in I would give them traits of a Virgo. Sometimes it doesn't carry out, but it's a place to start. Loretha has an opinion about everybody. That's what I love about black people—they'll tell you how they feel. To me, when you're writing a character, you have to make sure each one has a spotlight. They have to be different; otherwise it's just boring.



McMillan's latest follows a group of senior women confronting struggles as a team

Waiting to Exhale *(1995)*

There's a line in Lionel Shriver's book *We Need to Talk About Kevin* where she says that there's a moment where you meet your child for the first time—and it isn't when they're born. Is this something that your characters are experiencing? Yes. A lot of us think we know our parents and children, and we don't, and sometimes it takes something that makes one or both vulnerable or weak. There's a place where you're so vulnerable and you can't run from it anymore, and that's when we see ourselves in the mirror. You realize not only are the other people flawed, but you are too. That levels the playing field. And then you can love easier.

That's so beautiful. Girl, it's the truth. We judge each other too harshly.

When did you know you were a grownup? When I had to pay taxes. And when I didn't have to ask my mother's opinion.

When was that? A long time ago.

Loretha's daughter struggles with mental illness. I know from my own experience that many black families feel that there are certain things,

MCMILLAN: MATTHEW JORDAN SMITH; WAITING TO EXHALE: PHOTOFEST

like therapy, that they "don't do." Was it a challenge to portray those complicated views? Yes and no. I know about a lot of African Americans who were always afraid of it and didn't realize they needed it—the alcohol, drugs and other stuff were not cutting it. Nowadays there are a lot more African Americans who do understand and respect the value of getting help. There's no shame in it, and there shouldn't be shame in wanting to address it. I'm a big advocate.

One of my favorite things in this novel is how much it focused on food. We find so many things in food—it's power, it's celebration, it's comfort. "Whatchyou cookin' today?" "What you serving at the party?" "What are we gonna eat?" One or two of my characters are always thinking about their weight. Loretha almost cuts out her doctor for telling her what things she needs to give up. She's like, "I can't give up peach cobbler. Are you kidding me?" And there are a lot of books that you can read where nobody eats.

I have to ask what your comfort food is. It used to be peach cobbler, but I gave up sugar. I still eat French fries, I just don't eat them the way I used to eat them.

One of my favorite things is learning about writer diva behavior moments. Do you have any? Well, I just bought some Jimmy Choos.

What color? Oh honey, really cool, sexy velvet, like a yellowish green. Around the soles there are tiny rhinestones.

Before you were successful, did you have other novels that never saw the light of day? No. Times have really changed. My first book, *Mama,* was published over 30 years ago, and back then I did all my own publicity. I found out they weren't sending me on a book tour. Black writers didn't get that. No way. They had a literary rat pack, who were all white—and they had tours. I found out I wasn't going on one, and I was like, "What?"

They said that to the wrong person. I was proactive and sold out of my first printing.

That's hard to do now! I set up my own tour. I got the names of the stores in the back of the dictionary. There was no social media, but it worked.

How do you work under deadlines? I give it my best shot, but I'm not going to go crazy over it. My characters dictate the pace of the story. If my character's heart is broken, my heart is broken. I can't just wake up in the morning and go to a new chapter where she's swinging on a swing or something. Sometimes people don't understand that writing is an emotional journey and it's taxing. It can be inspiring and encouraging, but sometimes, you have to take a break. If somebody died, I was at that funeral.

What's something you've read more than once? *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* But I like a writer named Ring Lardner. It was he who helped me understand voice. I don't remember how I found his book *Haircut & Other Stories,* but I picked it up. He starts out with this guy talking, sitting in this chair; you don't know who he is. The whole thing is him telling us about this town. By the end of the story, you know everything. He liberated me. He let me know you can tell a story in any way you can get away with it.

I love how you don't remember how you found him. It's like he found you. Honey, when you're 68 there's a lot of stuff you don't remember.

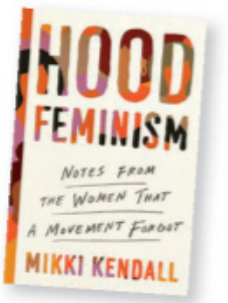
Do you and your friends have a group text? Oh, yeah. Just this morning: "Tell me how I look." "Do I look like a fool?" "Did I put too much makeup on?"

If I was in your group text, and I said to your friends, "Describe Terry," what would they say? "She can run her mouth. Run. Her. Mouth. But she only does it to make a point. Not to be right. Just to make a point."

Reid is the author of the best-selling novel Such a Fun Age

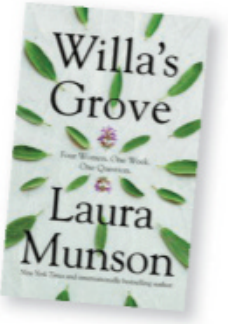
#TBR

On McMillan's reading list



HOOD FEMINISM
Mikki Kendall's essay collection interrogates the failure of mainstream feminism to include all women

HALSEY STREET
Naima Coster's debut novel follows a mother and daughter on diverging paths toward self-discovery



WILLA'S GROVE
In Laura Munson's novel, four women come together and lean on one another as they face major life crossroads

A scene from Camp Jened, where the staffers were often indistinguishable from the campers

REVIEW

A camp for the disabled that changed the world

By Stephanie Zacharek

AMONG PEOPLE OF ALL AGES TODAY, THERE'S A SENSE THAT hippies were a phenomenon of the past, a group of idealistic people who agitated for change and then faded into the ether as grownup responsibilities, like work and family, took over. But *Crip Camp,* a documentary by Nicole Newnham and Jim LeBrecht—released under Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground umbrella—suggests that in some areas their influence has been much more profound. The movie shows how a group of activists with disabilities pressed for the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. But their movement first took root years earlier, springing largely from the influence of an upstate New York summer camp for disabled teenagers called Camp Jened, in operation from the early 1950s until 1977. As co-director LeBrecht, himself a Jened attendee, puts it in the film, "This camp changed the world, and nobody knows this story."

Crip Camp combines archival and news footage with present-day interviews to draw a direct line from Camp Jened—run by hippies, so youthfully scruffy that they were often indistinguishable from the teenage campers—to the mobilization of the disability civil rights movement, and from there to the passing of the ADA. Many who attended the camp in the early 1970s felt that it was the first time they were seen, heard and acknowledged as individuals. "It was so funky!" says Jened camper Denise Jacobson, now a writer. "But it was utopia when we were there. There was no outside world."

"THERE REALLY HASN'T BEEN A FILM THAT RESETS THE ATTITUDE OF SOCIETY AROUND DISABILITY"

—JIM LEBRECHT, co-director, in the *Hollywood Reporter*

MUCH OF *CRIP CAMP* focuses on Judy Heumann, a Camp Jened counselor who went on to become a leader of the disability civil rights movement. We see her helming a demonstration in early-1970s New York City, as a small but mighty group blocks off an essential intersection by forming a circle in their wheelchairs. After moving to Berkeley, Heumann spearheaded a 24-day sit-in at the San Francisco office of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, an act of civil disobedience that helped to get Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 signed into law. The film shows activists during that sit-in sleeping on floors, communicating in sign language, engaging in a hunger strike. But that victory wasn't enough for Heumann. Several years later, during a meeting with fellow activists, she expresses her continued frustration: "I'm very tired of being thankful for accessible toilets."

Heumann's continued leadership helped secure the passing of the ADA. But the triumphs of these activists is made even sweeter by the footage of them as very young people at Camp Jened: in one scene, Heumann, as a vibrant 23-year-old, tries to get the campers to agree on what they'd like to make for dinner. Veal Parmesan has been ruled out; it's too expensive. How about lasagna? Grumbling fills the room. What strikes you is not that many of these young people are in wheelchairs, as Heumann is. It's their vitality, their vociferousness in saying no, absolutely *no,* even just to lasagna—the first step in a fight for one yes after another.

CRIP CAMP *streams March 25 on Netflix*

REVIEW

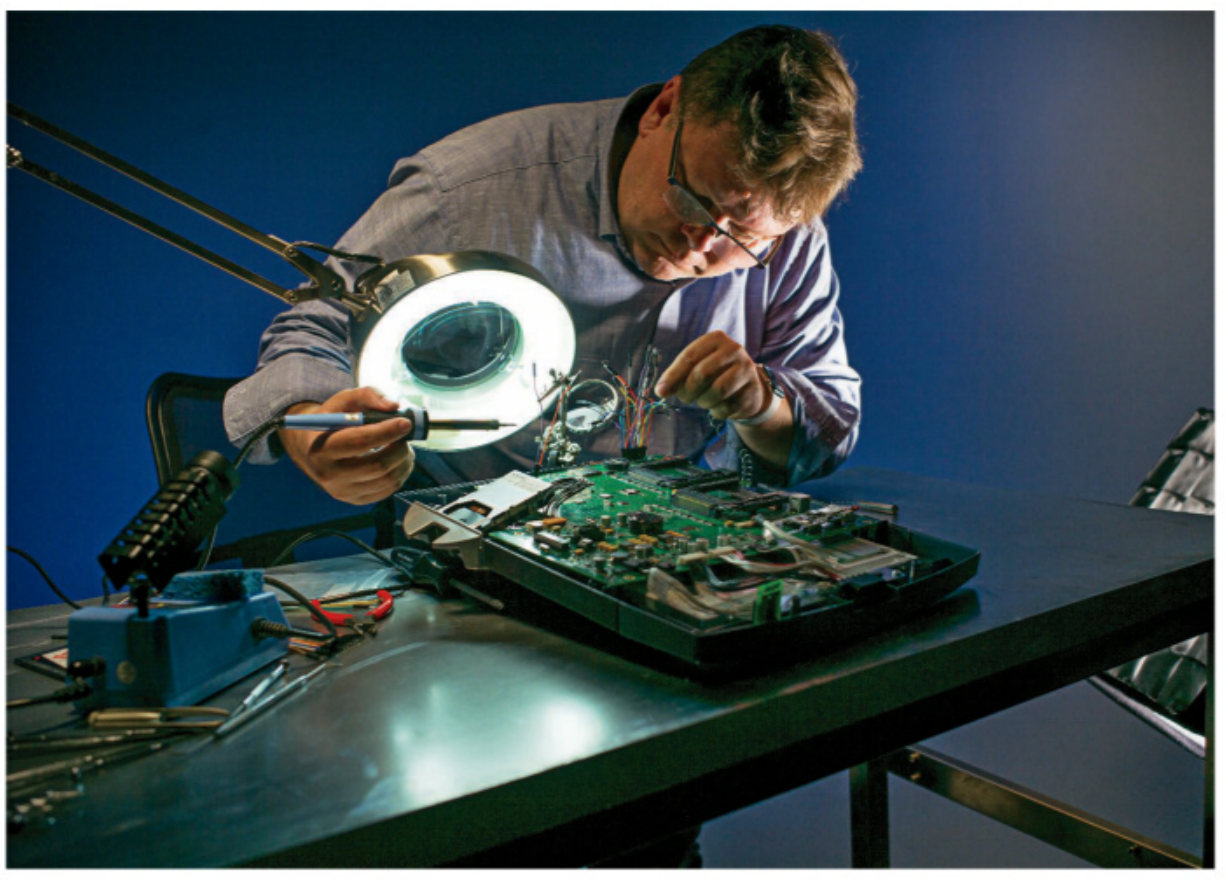
Democracy hangs by a few lines of code

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW HOW easy it is for a canny individual—or a malicious state actor—to hack into the electronic voting technology used in the U.S., don't watch *Kill Chain: The Cyber War on America's Elections*. In this unnervingly persuasive HBO documentary, directors Simon Ardizzone, Russell Michaels and Sarah Teale marshal cybersecurity experts, statisticians and lawmakers to expose cracks in the system that could easily allow hackers to affect voting results. The filmmakers' sources also include actual hackers, among them an individual who breached Alaska's voting system in 2016 just to see if he could. Although he explains in an on-camera interview (his face obscured to protect his identity) that he declined to alter any data, he says he could have sold his "backdoor" access for millions.

If that's not enough to scare anyone who cares about democracy, there's plenty more. One of the central figures of *Kill Chain* is election-security expert Harri Hursti, who explains, with clarity, just how vulnerable American voting systems are. (Hursti also appeared in the 2006 documentary *Hacking Democracy,* from the same team of filmmakers.) Although voting machines are supposed to be kept in secure facilities, Hursti found a widely used model for sale—on eBay. The vendor had hundreds of them, and he was selling them for around $79 each. Hursti bought a few, using them to explain how easily their workings could be examined and breached. He also brought a selection of voting machines to Def Con, a three-day conference for hackers, and invited attendees to go at them; one expert quickly figured out how to shut down a machine remotely from a laptop. "If you don't believe there's this kind of room in Russia running 24/7," Hursti notes, "you're kidding yourself."

The U.S. voting system is, as several interviewees in *Kill Chain* put it, a bipartisan concern; still, as the documentary notes, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has blocked votes on the Secure Elections Act and four similar bipartisan bills. What's more, the three companies that provide voting systems to the U.S. declined to be interviewed for *Kill Chain;* the assumption is that their products are fail-safe. If nothing else, *Kill Chain* demands that we ask whom we're trusting, and why. —S.Z.

KILL CHAIN *debuts March 26 on HBO*



Hacking expert Hursti shows how easy it is to breach vulnerable voting systems

CRIP CAMP: STEVE HONIGSBAUM; KILL CHAIN: HBO; UNCORKED: NINA ROBINSON

Nash and Athie: bottled dreams

REVIEW

Sweet and earthy, with a crisp finish

Parent-child conflicts are eternal, and *Uncorked*—written and directed by Prentice Penny—tells a simple and familiar story: young wine enthusiast Elijah (the breezily charming Mamoudou Athie) disappoints his father (Courtney B. Vance, always a pleasure to watch) when he opts to chase his ambition of becoming a master sommelier, rather than take over the family's Memphis barbecue business. Elijah's mother (played, vivaciously, by Niecy Nash) is more supportive, but even she can do only so much to protect Elijah's dream.

You've seen this sort of thing before, but you've never seen this particular family before, and their freewheeling banter gives *Uncorked* its airy, bubbly energy. It doesn't hurt that *Uncorked* is easy on the eyes, and on jangled nerves: it's set partly in Paris—Elijah travels there for his studies—and the city looks exactly as fancy and sparkly as it should. In some ways, though, the story's Memphis setting is more vivid. Its churches, its doughnut shops, its neighborhood joints capture a sense of the city's day-to-day life, a place where dreams deferred can turn, overnight, into dreams pursued—as long as you give yourself room to breathe. —*S.Z.*

UNCORKED *streams March 27 on Netflix*

Back in mentor mode, Gunn helps a contestant make it work

REVIEW

On Amazon, Tim and Heidi find a new project

By Judy Berman

REALITY TV HAS BECOME A MAJOR FRONT IN THE STREAMing wars, and Amazon is joining the fight with *Making the Cut.* Hosted by Heidi Klum and Tim Gunn, the 10-part competition, which will debut two new episodes weekly, pits a dozen fashion designers against one another in a series of creative challenges. While Klum anchors the sassy panel of judges, the avuncular Gunn, a paragon of good taste in his perfectly tailored suits, mentors the contestants. "This adventure is going to be like no other," Heidi tells the cast in their first meeting. "This is an unprecedented opportunity," Tim proclaims.

Neither is entirely true—as evidenced by, well, reality. Gunn, on top of a career in the fashion department at New York City's Parsons School of Design, has been a household name for 16 television seasons. He and Klum presided over Bravo's *Project Runway,* which set the template for a whole subgenre of creative competition shows, from *Top Chef* to *RuPaul's Drag Race;* spawned many spin-offs; and inspired adaptations on six continents. When the duo defected to Amazon in 2018, model Karlie Kloss and *Runway* winner turned A-list designer Christian Siriano stepped in to take their place. Then, this past January, Netflix launched a remarkably similar contest called *Next in Fashion,* hosted by model-designer Alexa Chung and *Queer Eye* fashion guru Tan France. More than 15 years after its 2004 premiere, *Runway* is still multiplying.

IT MAKES SENSE. As they compete for potential cord cutters who are loyal to particular long-running cable reality franchises—among which *Runway* has proved to be one of the most enduring—streaming services need to provide those viewers with reasonable facsimiles of their faves. The phenomenon that is *Drag Race,* a breakout hit from queer-centric channel Logo that moved to the more visible VH1 after proving its wide appeal, explains why Netflix is saturated with drag content and three of RuPaul's girls have an unscripted series, *We're Here,* in the works at HBO. *Runway,* with its simple formula of talented contestants, celebrity hosts and sharp-tongued judges, seems easy to replicate.

Klum has said that she and Gunn left Bravo because "our imagination was bigger than what we were allowed to do."

Making the Cut and *Next in Fashion* aren't exact clones, but their differences from *Runway* do seem reverse-engineered to avoid too much overlap. While *Next* pairs up designers for a series of team challenges (confusingly, some have a previous relationship with their collaborator and some don't), *Making* feels like a big-budget flex from a company with some of the world's deepest pockets. The debut season flies contestants from New York to Paris before the first challenge even begins; Tokyo follows on the itinerary. (What a luxury jetting freely between hemispheres seems in the time of coronavirus.) Its top prize of $1 million dwarfs the $250,000 *Runway* gives winners. Unseen seamstresses stitch together garments overnight because, as Gunn often repeats, this isn't a sewing competition. Judges include style stars Naomi Campbell and Nicole Richie. The show tries to make the most of Tim and Heidi, who couldn't have come cheap, with silly but inoffensive skits where they visit local tourist destinations.

Amazon isn't just throwing around cash because it can, of course. The mega-retailer will sell an "accessible" look from each episode—creating a new revenue stream for Prime—in yet another reminder that *Runway*'s watchable imitators exist for monetary reasons more than creative ones. For shows that thrive on their participants' ingenuity, the irony is striking.

MAKING THE CUT *hits Amazon on March 27*

Duncan Joiner and Abby Ryder Fortson probe the depths

REVIEW

Loop dreams

Swedish artist Simon Stalenhag makes the familiar strange, in digital images that place hulking robots, decaying machines and cement towers in rural landscapes populated by regular people. At first, these uncanny works were like concept art for a film that didn't exist. But Stalenhag soon reverse-engineered a premise for the art, which he collected in a book called *Tales From the Loop,* about a town where the government had built an eerie underground research facility called the Loop.

Amazon's adaptation moves the Loop from Sweden to Ohio, in eight loosely connected sci-fi vignettes from creator Nathaniel Halpern *(Legion).* The show captures the unnerving beauty of Stalenhag's work; in a premiere directed by music-video auteur Mark Romanek, a house disintegrates upward, drifting piece by piece into the sky. Sadly, stiff, humorless scripts stretch 15 minutes' worth of plot over hour-long episodes, leaving a cast led by Jonathan Pryce and Rebecca Hall scant material from which to build characters. In concentrating on its strange tableaus, Halpern's *Loop* neglects to ground the tales they illustrate in the familiarity of human life. *—J.B.*

TALES FROM THE LOOP *comes to Amazon on April 3*

MAKING THE CUT, TALES FROM THE LOOP: AMAZON PRIME VIDEO; THREE BUSY DEBRAS: ADULT SWIM

REVIEW

The surreal housewives of Lemoncurd

THREE BUSY DEBRAS IS A WEIRD SHOW. Set in the fictional town of Lemoncurd—one of those posh Connecticut suburbs where it still looks like the '50s and every stately home sits atop acres of manicured lawn—it follows a trio of housewives who are, yes, all named Debra. You can tell by her string of pearls that Sandy Honig's *(Isn't It Romantic)* Debra is the alpha; Alyssa Stonoha's Debra is her deadpan deputy. That makes Mitra Jouhari's character the odd Debra out, scorned and scapegoated by her friends. In the premiere, Stonoha and Jouhari squash Honig's pool boy between their cars. Charged with disposing of his body, Jouhari buys a purse big enough to stand inside and pays for it with a fist-size emerald straight out of a video game. "Exact change—nice touch," chirps the clerk.

Desperate Housewives, The Stepford Wives, Douglas Sirk melodramas and every other pop-cultural depiction of stultifying lives of women in suburbia are in the DNA of this strange and wonderful short-form series on Adult Swim. But *Debras,* created by its stars with the backing of Amy Poehler's Paper Kite Productions, does more than remix homemaker tropes à la *Weeds.* Based on the avant-garde comedy Honig, Jouhari and Stonoha have been performing for years, the show is delightfully absurdist. The Debras wear stark white and deliver ridiculous lines ("A Debra must be ready to conceive at all times") with mannered deliberateness. Sitcom clichés get stretched to extremes; Stonoha shoves a cop into a closet, exits wearing his uniform … and then he struts out in her character's pantsuit. Ingenious sight gags abound, from a woman pruning a hedge with shaving cream and a razor to a board game called Security Questions.

It's particularly encouraging to see the Debras on Adult Swim. Beloved for stoner-friendly fare such as *Rick and Morty, The Eric Andre Show* and *Robot Chicken,* the brand has been criticized for its lack of female creators. As it continues to champion oddballs like Tim & Eric, whose new series *Beef House* premieres back-to-back with *Debras,* experimental comedy from women languishes on mainstream platforms. (See: Maria Bamford's brilliant, canceled Netflix show *Lady Dynamite.*) Here's hoping the Debras are just the first of many new female guests invited to Adult Swim's pool party. —J.B.

THREE BUSY DEBRAS *debuts on Adult Swim on March 29*

Stonoha, left, and Jouhari star as two of the show's three Debras

What to read while social distancing

NO MATTER WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE world, a good book can provide insight, comfort or a welcome escape. As the COVID-19 outbreak continues and many of us are seeking entertainment while staying home, now may be the time to finally dig into that epic novel you've had on your shelf forever, revisit an old favorite or try something out of your reading comfort zone.

Thankfully, books are easy to access without leaving home. Libraries across the map allow cardholders to borrow e-books and audiobooks without visiting a branch. (Try the free Libby app, which connects you to your local library.) If you'd like to purchase a book, whether physical or digital, consider browsing the website of your local independent bookstore.

Everyone has different ways of coping with the events of the outbreak; these books will allow you to get however close to or far from what's going on outside as you want. From stories of pandemics and postapocalyptic societies and triumphant narratives about spending time alone to pure, page-turning escapism, here are 22 books and series to read while staying home. (There are more on **time.com.**)

Dive into pandemics and apocalyptic worlds

World War Z

Max Brooks' "oral history" of a virus that originated in China and spread around the world, transforming millions of people into zombies, is a prescient look at the sociopolitical response to a pandemic—and a thriller to boot.

The *Passage* trilogy

Justin Cronin's series, set in the near future, follows the grim ramifications of a secret government project gone wrong. In attempting to extend human life, scientists created a drug with some nasty side effects, transforming most of the world's population into vampire-like creatures.

The *Broken Earth* trilogy

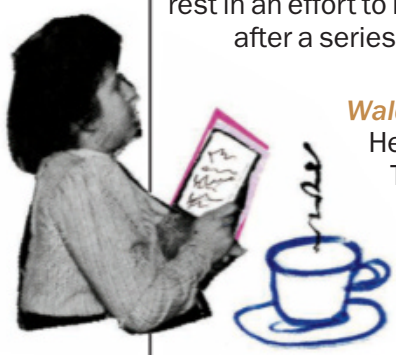
The only people with the power to protect their world from recurring cataclysms are also its most oppressed in N.K. Jemisin's trilogy. The acclaimed series is set in the Stillness, a hostile continent where magic wielders called orogenes can prevent seismic events but are attacked and subjugated.

Severance

While a catastrophic fever plagues the world, Candace Chen continues to work at her job producing Bibles. Miraculously well, she's offered a big bonus if she continues commuting. Ling Ma's novel flips between those harrowing days as the illness festers and Candace's uncertain future, when she teams up with a group of fellow survivors.

Station Eleven

A group of musicians and actors travel around newly formed settlements to keep their art alive after a swine-flu pandemic wipes out most of the world's population. In following the troupe's journey, Emily St. John Mandel showcases the impact of the pandemic on the lives of all of them.



Love in the Time of Cholera

In an unnamed city similar to Cartagena, Colombia, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza are young and falling deeply in love when Fermina chooses to marry someone else. Against a backdrop of recurring civil war and recurring cholera epidemics, Gabriel García Márquez explores death, decay and the idea of lovesickness as disease.

Zone One

The survivors of a global pandemic attempt to rebuild while coping with post-apocalyptic stress disorder in Colson Whitehead's outside-the-box zombie novel. The story focuses on a fragmented New York City, where characters quickly discover the difficulties of upholding order in the midst of chaos.

Reflect on solitude and survival

Wave

In 2004, Sonali Deraniyagala lost her entire family to the Indian Ocean tsunami and was left to bear unimaginable grief. But in working to rebuild, she reminds us all how to move forward in the wake of devastation.

My Year of Rest and Relaxation

Can you sleep away your problems? That's what Ottessa Moshfegh's protagonist ponders before embarking on a yearlong journey of extreme—drug-fueled—rest in an effort to reset her life after a series of tragedies.

Walden

Henry David Thoreau's 1854 meditation doubles as a manual for social distancing: he finds joy in housework and the sounds of daily life that ring out around him; he champions self-reliance, introspection and environmentalism. Sections about escaping the constant distractions of modern life ring even more true in the digital age.

A Gentleman in Moscow

After the Russian Revolution, an aristocrat is sentenced to serve a life sentence under house arrest in the attic of a luxurious hotel. Amor Towles' hit novel spans decades as it traces the protagonist's new perspective on the world, which he can view only from the windows of the Metropol.

The Martian

Stranded on Mars after an accident, an astronaut must use his engineering skills to survive alone with few supplies. Andy Weir's fast-paced narrative examines how one person's perseverance and creativity can carry him through an unthinkable trial.

Solitary

Albert Woodfox was the longest-standing solitary-confinement prisoner in the U.S. before his 2016 release. His harrowing memoir tells the story of four decades spent in a 9-by-6-ft.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOANNA NEBORSKY FOR TIME

cell in Louisiana, which he was allowed to leave for only an hour each day.

Settle into a long, ambitious read

The *Wolf Hall* trilogy
At a combined 2,000-plus pages, Hilary Mantel's novels will provide reading material for weeks. *Wolf Hall, Bring Up the Bodies* and *The Mirror and the Light* are first a deep character study of Thomas Cromwell, who rose through the ranks of Tudor society to become King Henry VIII's chief enforcer—but the series is also a vibrant political drama.

The Toni Morrison canon
Few authors have provided more immersive reading experiences than the late Morrison: her visual, aural and olfactory details are startlingly evocative, while her narratives unfurl over decades of tension with epic climaxes. All of her novels, published over 45 years, deserve to be read and reread as testaments to American pain, perseverance and joy.

1Q84
As with most Haruki Murakami novels, *1Q84* is a strange brew of hard-boiled detective fiction, nonchalant surrealism and melancholy. It involves parallel worlds, malevolent religious cults and metaphysical sex. But the plot isn't really the point. Reading this book is more about sinking into a dreamlike mood where the mundane can shift almost imperceptibly to the fantastic.

War and Peace
A book on everyone's I-feel-like-I-should-read-that list, *War and Peace* is a sprawling story about fundamental change. Through war and the political and social upheaval that follow, Leo Tolstoy's 500-plus characters transform into completely different people. Their growth captures humanity in the way that novels told from a single point of view cannot.

Escape into fantasies, thrills and simple pleasures

My Sister, the Serial Killer
How strong are the bonds of sisterhood, really? In Oyinkan Braithwaite's electric comedy, Korede is wondering. Her younger sister Ayoola has just killed off boyfriend No. 3, and Korede, a nurse, again helps her clean the crime scene and move the body. But she's getting frustrated with Ayoola—her prettier, probably sociopathic counterpart—especially as she narrows in on her next target.

I Feel Bad About My Neck
Writer and filmmaker Nora Ephron's mother once told her that "everything is copy," an adage that she took to heart with her treasured collection of witty and hilarious essays about the challenges and triumphs of being a modern woman who's growing older.

The *IQ* series
Joe Ide delivers a fresh update to the hotshot-detective genre. His protagonist is Isaiah "IQ" Quintabe, a high school dropout who lives in Long Beach, Calif., and uses deduction and ingenuity to stay one step ahead of the city's cutthroat underworld.

The *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy
No number of mansions, fancy cars or designer gowns can solve familial strife or cure romance woes for the moneyed elite of Singapore—and it's a testament to Kevin Kwan's measured humor that he can turn rich-people problems into a fun and humanizing romp.

The *Harry Potter* series
When Harry Potter fans are in crisis, they turn to the wizarding world for comfort and moral direction. After all, an entire generation grew up learning the differences between right and wrong, bravery and fear, acceptance and bigotry from J.K. Rowling's stories of a great wizarding war. The series can function as pure escapism and thrilling entertainment—but also a lesson on how to support and empathize with the vulnerable.

—*TIME* STAFF

Doris Kearns Goodwin The historian on mobilizing business for good, the lack of leadership today and FDR's lessons for facing coronavirus

This moment feels unprecedented. As a historian, do you think it actually is? What makes it so hard to absorb is that the overwhelming majority have never seen a situation that so severely disrupts our daily routines. Maybe that's where history can provide perspective and solace. There are two points when we've weathered this in the 20th century. When the Great Depression hit rock bottom in March of '33, the vital organs of the economy were closing down. That was the situation that FDR faced. Eventually, government jobs carried the people through until the Depression comes to a full end with the mobilization for [World War II]. Which brings you to the second big time that reminds me of this.

"HISTORY CAN PROVIDE PERSPECTIVE AND SOLACE"

You've written of how FDR prepared for World War II by asking the U.S. to produce more than 10 times its prewar capacity for planes, and how what seemed like an impossible demand ended up motivating producers … Fifty thousand planes in one fell swoop, which would mean we would have an armada next to none. And he gets it. All sorts of other companies are transforming themselves as well. They needed parachutes badly, so manufacturers of silk ribbons make parachutes. Toy companies make compasses. Typewriter companies produce rifles. Piano factories produce airplane motors.

What should we learn from that WW II mobilization? The main thing is that the government had to underlay the beginning of the process. When government and business get together in a positive way, which they did during World War II, that's what has to happen now. More than just words, we need to feel that sense of activity. If these things start, we'll feel that yes, the American energy and our business know-how and our technological strength will come to the fore, but they've got to *start*.

NOAM GALAI—GETTY IMAGES

Having studied presidential leadership during crises, how do you think our leaders are doing during this one? Forgetting what we don't know, which is what would have happened if they'd responded earlier, the big difference between the situation in World War II and now is that when Roosevelt spoke to the nation, it was really a single voice, it was a trusted voice. We don't have that single voice in the government right now that can command the facts.

Are there lessons from that time that people who aren't the President can keep in mind? I think people [should] realize how important their role is in withstanding this sacrifice. Right now, we're just hoping [social distancing] is going to make a difference, but it will.

When your book *Leadership* came out, you told TIME that you liked to think it would reassure people "to know that if you think we're in the worst of times right now, it isn't the worst." Do you still feel that way? I do. If you go back to the Civil War, they thought even after Fort Sumter that it would be over in 90 days. They couldn't have imagined what they'd have to endure. That was worse. But the crisis is going to come after [COVID-19], if hopefully this comes to an end. The government's going to have to step in in a much bigger way than just sending a few paychecks. There may need to be real social and economic reform that comes out of this, as it did out of the Depression.

And FDR will be the person to look to on that? Yes, exactly right. When he comes in, people were feeling like the whole country collapsed. That feeling was similar to what we're feeling now. But there were actions taken that allowed us to get through it. That's the key. There have been crises. We've had really hard times before—it's just that we know how they ended up.

—LILY ROTHMAN

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